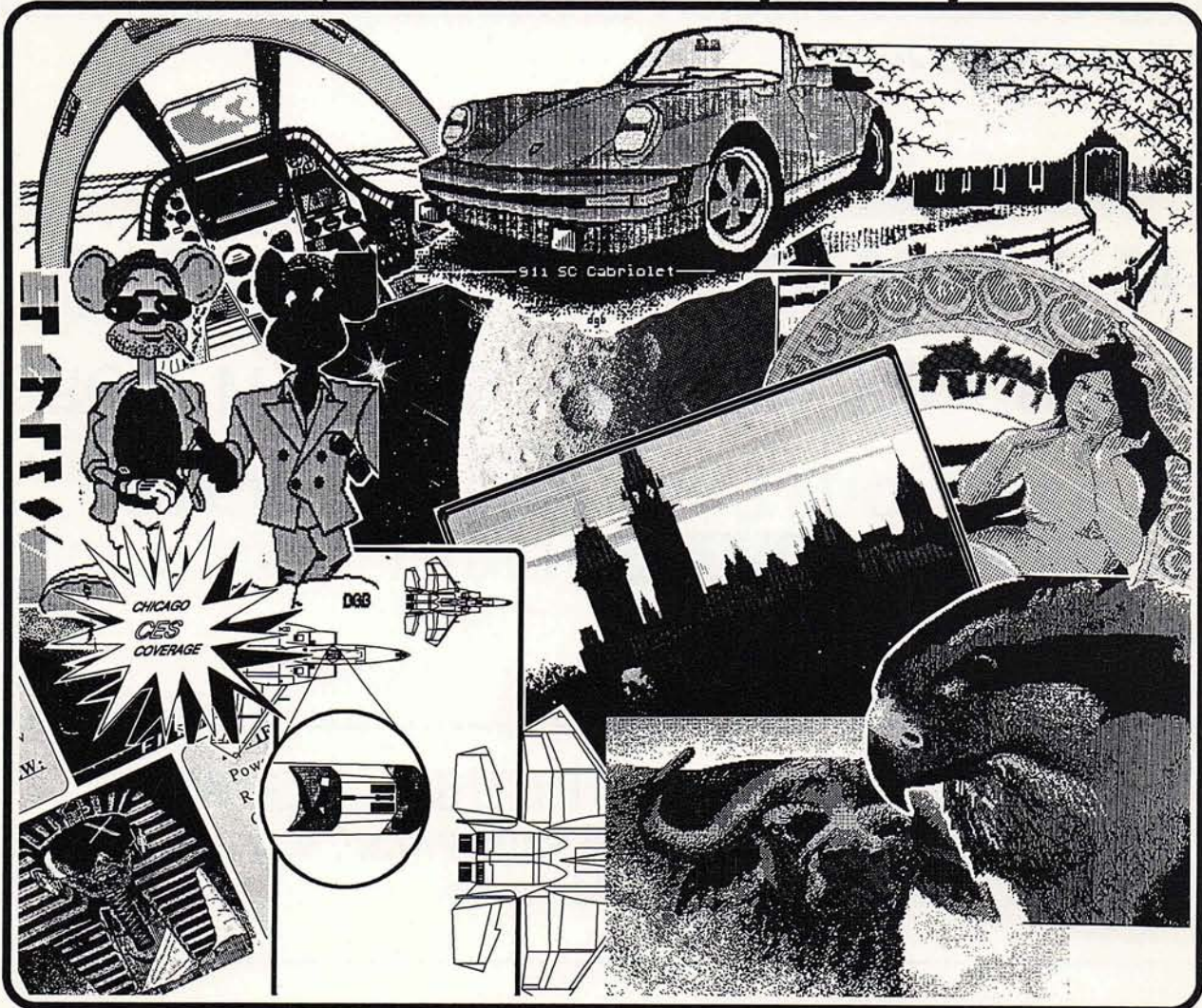


BYTOWN *Bytes*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL ATARI USERS' GROUP

July - August 1987

Inside: Complete Index of all Bytown Byte Issues



Special Baseball Coverage • Plus Other Features and Reviews

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BYTOWN BYTES

JULY - AUGUST 1987

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ADVERTISING Wayne Longman

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[all Atari 16-bit computers]

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N.C.A.U.G. 1987 MEETING SCHEDULE

ST Meetings will be held the last Tuesday of every month; XE Meetings the last Saturday of every month.

ST MEETINGS

Tuesday 7 PM

----- Tuesday, July 28 - Combined Meeting -----
----- Tuesday, August 25 - Combined Meeting -----
Sept. 29
Oct. 27

XE MEETINGS

Sat. 9:30 AM

----- Tuesday, July 28 - Combined Meeting -----
----- Tuesday, August 25 - Combined Meeting -----
Sept. 26
Oct. 31

Meetings are held in the auditorium of the NRC Building, 100 Sussex Drive.

BYTOWN BYTES is published 9 times a year by the National Capital Atari Users' Group, P.O. Box 1385, Station 'B', Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1P 5R4.

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Exchange Subscriptions are available to other Atari User Groups. Send exchange newsletters to Dave Sarles at the address shown above.

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Submissions of articles or advertising copy, subscription requests or back issue orders should be sent to the N.C.A.U.G. at the address above. Local members wishing to submit articles may leave them at G Plus, 130 Albert Street. The deadline for articles and ads is the 12th day of the preceding month.

RAMTOP REMARKS

Summer time, summer time, sum-sum-summer time. Yes the all too brief season is upon us once again, and our trusty XEs and STs are put aside for suntan lotion, and beach towels. So far things have been going smoothly in the club, there is nothing like putting your feet up and watching other people run the meetings. You know this job of Director is the sort of position one can easily get addicted to, no fuss, no muss.

In a more serious vein I would like to inform everyone that Wayne Longman our Advertising/Merchandising Coordinator has stepped down after three years due to burn out. I have been working with Wayne as one of his helpers, since the first meeting I attended, and the club has lost a hard worker. Thank you Wayne for all of your work, it has not gone unnoticed.

The future existence of the Advertising/Merchandising Coordinator position will be discussed at an upcoming Executive meeting, but if anyone is interested in taking the post over please let me know.

Last, but not least, do not forget that during the months of July and August both the XE and ST meetings will occur on the same day, (the last Tuesday of the month), at the same time, (7 pm), at the usual place. So enjoy your summer issue of Bytown Bytes, and throw another shrimp on the barbie.

Keith Burnage
NCAUG Director

THE GREAT 'NAME THE NEWSLETTER' CONTEST

Submit your idea(s) for a new name for this newsletter to the Editor in writing, verbally, by phone, mail, drop off at G Plus (Albert St.), or any other way that you can think of. The deadline for ideas is the combined August meeting. After that the name will be chosen by committee (no more democracy here!). The new masthead will appear on the September-October newsletter, available at the September meeting. The contributor of the winning name will receive a substantial prize, along with the glory and adulation of his peers.

The Editor Writes

Well, this will probably be the last issue of Bytown Bytes. No, wait! We're not closing down; it's just that the next issue should be carrying the new name for the newsletter. You have until the August meeting to submit any ideas for a new name. (See the box below Ramtop Remarks on this page for more information.)

This issue has the first installment of a game hints column called Visiclues, put together by Michael Riley. Please give Mike all the support that you can.

NCAUG member Alex Weatherston approached me with an index of Bytown Bytes which I have included in this issue. The index lists all articles that have appeared in Bytown Bytes, up to and including this issue. Alex even went as far as to borrow my copies of the NCAUG Newsletter (the club newsletter before Bytown Bytes came along), and has indexed all of them. The index of the NCAUG Newsletters will appear in the next issue.

Which brings me to my next point; an apology to authors whose submitted articles do not appear in this issue. Even with adding four pages to this newsletter, I still had to leave out articles (totalling over eleven pages), submitted by Rick Beetham, Harry Wilkinson, Alex Weatherston, and Dave Dempster. These articles will appear next issue.

Just because I have extra articles please don't stop writing and submitting them! It would be nice to have enough articles to be able to arrange them in some sort of logical manner. The next newsletter, (the September-October issue to be released at the September meeting) will feature spreadsheet programs.

Format for Submissions

I would ask that all articles be submitted with some sort of supporting printout. I find it difficult (especially with files that have come through a modem) to know how to format the paragraphs. This becomes especially apparent when I have to try to translate a chart or table that has lost all its formatting either through downloading, or conversion to Publishing Partner. Also, all articles submitted must carry an authors name, and if it is not original material, an indication of its source. A read of the apology on the next page will explain this request..

Keep those articles coming!
Until next time ... happy computing!

Bob Thompson

PS. I plan to keep including those damned Reader's Survey Cards in each newsletter until you decide to send them in. So please do.

IN MEMORIAL - BERRY MINUK

Berry Minuk, a member of the National Capital Atari Users' Group, passed away on June 28, 1987 in Ottawa. He was buried in Rehovot, Israel, on July 2. He is survived by his mother in Israel and two sisters in Canada.

Berry was a genuine computer enthusiast. At the time of his death, he was the owner of a Sinclair-Timex, two TI-99/4As, an 8-bit Atari, a 1040ST with hard drive and also, purchased quite recently, an IBM XT clone. Besides having active interests in both the ST and XE sections of the NCAUG, and assisting the club executive from time to time, Berry was one of the founding members and the current president of the Ottawa "TI-99/4A" Users Group. He carried out the responsibilities in this position notwithstanding his later acquisition of other computer systems. In addition, he was a member of both the Carleton Home Computer Users' Group and the National Defence Headquarters "101" Computer Club. He was also a very active member of the Ottawa Jazz Club. Berry was at all times ready to share his considerable knowledge of personal computers with others. He was the catalyst in the acquisition of many computer systems, by his friends and co-workers, including the writer of this article.

Berry was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1931. He received Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law degrees from the University of Manitoba. He worked as a lawyer in private practice in Winnipeg for 10 years before joining the federal Department of Justice and moving to Ottawa. He spent the last 20 years in Ottawa providing legal opinions, initially to the Department of Agriculture, and later to the Department of National Defence.

Alex Weatherston



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An Apology

In the May 1987 issue of Bytown bytes we ran an article called "The Pawn - A Spoiler". This article was received from one of our younger members who had received it from a friend. The article carried no title, no author's name, and no indication of its source.

After printing the article, as author unknown, we were informed that the article came from a copyrighted source. The Pawn article is copyright (c) 1986 by Neil McCulloch, and was published in THE ELECTRONIC GAMER online magazine on CompuServe, with all rights reserved.

It has been the policy of Bytown Bytes to credit authors and sources, and of course we do not knowingly reprint copyrighted material. Never having used a modem myself, (until this incident I was not even aware that there were such things as copyrighted articles on BBS's), I therefore had no cause to suspect this article.

In the future all articles submitted to Bytown Bytes must carry the author's name, and if the material is not submitted by the author, a source for the article must be stated.

We apologise to the author of the Pawn article, Neil McCulloch, and to THE ELECTRONIC GAMER for any inconvenience caused.

Bob Thompson
Editor, Bytown Bytes

ABOUT THE COVER

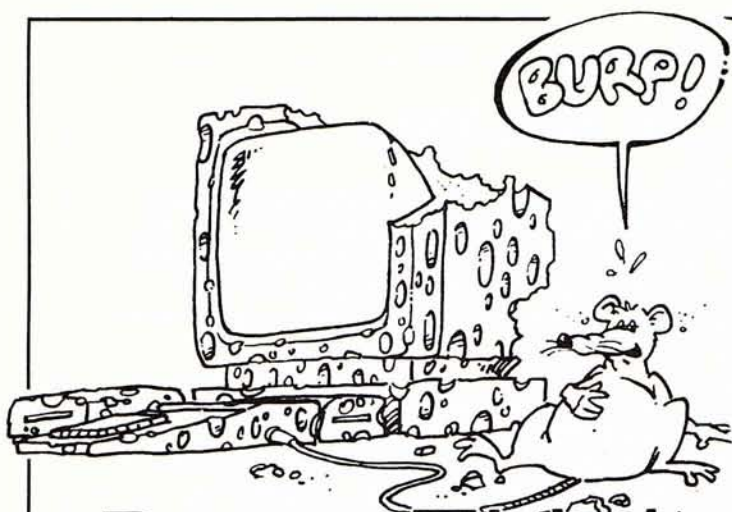
As this is probably the last issue of Bytown Bytes (before the name change), and we have an index of the contents of all issues of Bytown Bytes in this newsletter, it seemed appropriate to feature a sampling of the cover art that has appeared on the eleven various issues. (Besides, I couldn't find any other suitable picture.)

Jim Turner has the record by having 6 covers to his credit, (F15, Parliament Buildings, Eagle, Harrier Cockpit, Mucha, and Water Buffalo);

Glenn Brown has three covers, (Miami Mice, Porche, and ZZ Top Album covers);

Hooman Simyar has 1 cover, (Mercury Surface); and **Bob Thompson** has 1 cover, (Bridge).

We are always looking for more original artwork to go on our front covers. Is anybody interested in trying?



Byte This!

By the time I pay for this computer, printer, modem, powerbar, surge protector and mouse house, I won't even be able to afford a good divorce lawyer, let alone software. And a computer without software is almost as bad as an empty rum bottle. The only good thing about a rum bottle is that at least getting it empty is the best part. Without software, all I can do is play with the mouse and move icons around the screen. If I wanted to spend all day moving garbage cans, I would have completed my grade 8 education. The desktop that Atari supplies is the ugliest thing I have seen since Froot Loops bought her bikini, but after I found the control panel and tried out all the other colour combinations, I know why thousands of people march through the streets shouting "Green is Beautiful!". (I remember as a kid, watching the news and seeing demonstrators who marched through the streets shouting "one two three four, we don't want your Commadore!").

You may well ask what is left in life after a person has moved a pink garbage can on an orange background and been told that "Drive A is not responding" in 11 different colours. That's why Atari gave us a keyboard. There are more keys here than you can count (unless you can count to 95) and most of them work. I think I should apply for unemployment insurance for the ones that don't work. After all, some of them did work for 26 weeks. Anyway, I'm leading up to the fact that late one night, when I had almost finished the bottle, I pressed the alt key, the cir home key, the caps lock and the F7 at the same time as I ran my mouse in a zig-zag and discovered a new number. It's between three and four. It's the square root of 11 and the cube root of 13 and will revolutionize the whole mathematics industry.

This is really a number and does all kinds of neat things. Someone now has to design another bar to go on all the cereal boxes for those silly little codes that nothing but a computer can read. All the kids that thought they were old enough to drink will have to wait another year before they are legal and I figure that with another day a month, this December 31 will ring in 1856 (that's not the right way to write it, because before you get to the 8 or 5 or 6, you have to use my new number). Jack is really going to be upset to find out that his computer uses Motorola 67999 chips and he has probably been paying too much for them.

My mind is so overwhelmed by this discovery that I had to hitch-hike down to the store and get another 39 ounce bottle of rum. I think the first thing I should do is patent my number but I don't know how to do it. I waited until Froot Loops finished doing her exercises (she calls them "yogurt" and they're supposed to keep her in shape, but I think the shape she is trying to keep in is a 187 pound sausage).

She doesn't like me enough to help me with anything, especially if it has to do with the computer, so I lied and told her that I needed help to patent a better mousetrap. Her good eye lit up as she could see the end of the hated computer but I immediately corrected myself to 'better rat trap'. This disappointed her until she realized the commercial possibilities of this invention, particularly the chance to open a whole string of fast food outlets and not have to pay for all that expensive chicken. She is an expert on all things patent, and had me carry her down to the nearest shoe store to find out how they patented their leather. That salesman didn't have the faintest idea about patented leather and knows even less about the types of meat that people will eat in a bucket or a barrel. Besides, since we have two children, no matter what their deficiencies, I don't think that he was accurate in his description of our ancestry.

I have to think about this a little more. It's obvious that I'm in over my head. I've got a brand new number that I don't even have a name for and don't have the nerve to tell Froot Loops about. She's going to find out when we finally get to the patent office and I begin to fill in the form. I'll get to the part where it says "What are you patenting?". and I'll fill in "a number". She'll scream "A rat trap!" and the cat will be out of the bag. everything will hit the fan and I'll be a dead duck. This whole thing has become the pits. She's going to kill me and I don't even know how old I am any more.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This issue marks the begining of a new policy of honesty for this publication. Namely, unless we identify our sources, at sometime someone will eventually sue the pants off us. To be consistent, all articles will be sourced. I considered using a number of names before I settled on my own.

Terry Webb...

A bit of rib

by kathleen wright

I remember key punch cards
computers were cumbersome then
but the experts knew
and some of them
were women, too

I remember lots of things
and the first byte was
just a start

Our first computer came home in 1984, and frankly I did not have the time for it. It sat around all day just making little blips and bleeps, and would be no use at all. Hardly a gossip piece. Nothing to make Mrs. So-so green with envy. I couldn't even imagine getting together with the girls for a computerware party. So I just let him have his little fun.

As for the children: it was all awesome for them at first. There was some fun to be had, but the novelty did wear off, returning anew each time the man dug up a hot item.

I have to admit, every one but me learned to "hunt and peck." Does "hen-pecking" count?

All parents know too well that hearing is selective. Children hear what they want to hear. Computers are even worse, insisting on your using their very own phrasing in such exacting ways. The children learned this too, and somehow learned to follow instructions carefully and to pay good attention to detail. Maybe they would have learned these things without a computer.

They all learned about time-sharing, in this case taking turns or no computer. Nothing new in that, but with successively more complex and interesting computers, I would not hesitate to say that sharing was encouraged. Playing computer games was lots of fun, especially as the graphics improved. I was eventually cajoled into some games, much to everyone's delight. Anyone could outperform me; but,

when you've been around as long as I have, you get to believe "speed isn't everything."

The man of this house is a gadget man, by choice. He is eager to try the new and finds the technology irresistible. Naturally, this meant having more computers. He could not resist the temptation.

He smuggled the second computer into our little world surreptitiously disguised as a word processor. The devil knows how I like words. Words, words, words, and more of them too; I love words.

I may not be fast at games, but I am smart enough to try to make my mistakes in private. So I waited for my chance: everyone was out doing important things and I was alone with it. I turned it on, put in some words, and it froze. It wouldn't do anything! In desperation I read the little book, gave up, turned the machine off. But something told me to try again. After many many trials it worked.

I have to admit, I am no mechanic, having long ago learned to believe I cannot do these things. But I do know words, and I hate to admit: the thing was fun.

It was especially fun to delete my mistakes. If I didn't like something I wrote: ZAP. Gone.

With the next computer I began to get fancy. I tried to use it to simplify my life, by doing menus, keeping track of supplies in the refrigerator and freezer, things like that. I was disappointed because it could only keep track if I kept on punching in the changes, and I already knew what they were. I wanted it to tell me; not to make more work. I want a computer that will keep track of the groceries, remind me when I have company coming, schedule the dentist appointments and plan the chauffeuring. I can just imagine the look on my dentist's receptionist when the computer calls up to remind her that I am due for a check-up. If it could also do a little dusting and manage the laundry without losing socks, I would be one appreciative lady.

Not much has changed over the years, men are always the same: wanting something new and blaming me, and I don't know what he's grumbling about, when am I going to give him a turn on my computer.

yours,

as ever

SNEAK ○ PEEKS

NEW IN TOWN

ST WARS (MILES COMPUTING)

From the company that gave us Harrier Strike Mission comes a 3D game that is like a cross between Starglider and the arcade game Star Wars. The premise of the game has you finding a lone fighter and heading off to defeat the Tyranny. As with Starglider you first have various enemy craft on the surface, that sound familiar to the afore mentioned game, surface walkers, tanks and craft that deposit surface walkers. Once the surface is cleared you do an impersonation of Luke Skywalker by heading for the Starbase Trench that features bstacles found in the Star wars arcade game, but the game does go one step further by sending you down tunnels and through obstacle rooms to destroy the Starbase Power Generator. This game is for one player and features 3D graphics, digitized sound effects, and uses the same method of flying as Harrier Strike Mission. (ST) \$54.95 Can.

MICROLEAGUE BASEBALL (MLSA)

(9) A conversion and enhancement of the 8-bit game that lets you manage, play and match up professional teams from the past and present. While version II plays the same as the original version there are some added improvements. This game gives you hands on access to manage just like a real manager from setting line ups, bull pen action. pinch hitters and runners, what sort of offense and defense you will employ to meet the situation. The improvements include the addition of the Box Score & Stats Compiler instead of, separately as with the 8-bit version, that lets you see how altering the batting line up affects a players individual performance or whether a seldom used pitcher can make the grade. Also added are Stadium and pitcher factors, the possibility of injuries, rain, power outages and having the manager ejected during the game. A definite game for any fan of baseball to have. The addition of the General Managers program, to be released later, will allow you to draft your own teams. See review for details. (ST) \$74.95 Can.

STILL IN TOWN

CHAMPIONSHIP BB (GAMESTAR)

(4.5) A game that is similar in look and style to the original 8-bit game, but is better in many ways. A split way screen shows the infield, and a view from behind the plate to see where pitches are going. You

With summer comes lazy afternoons, late night swims, in short the time of year when things slow to a crawl. So it comes as no surprise that the same is true for new software. June has been a very slow month, but then again who wants to be cooped up inside with all that sunshine out there. So this is it until summer starts fading so keep your eyes on the shelves around town for new releases after this issue or show up to the meetings for new product announcements.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

COURSE DISK II (ACCOLADE)

For those fortunate have aced the three courses included with Mean 18, Accolade has three more courses awaiting you. Famous Course Disk II includes Turnberry in Scotland, Inverness Club in Ohio, and Harbour Town in South Carolina for you to pit your golfing skills against. (ST) Release and price T.B.A

STAR FLEET II (INTERSTEL)

Feed up with being out numbered by those nasty Krellans? Then Star Fleet II: Krellan Commander puts you on the winning side by giving you command of a Krellan Battle Fleet whose mission is to take the fight to the soft United galactic Alliance. Make a name for yourself as the Attila the Hun of galactic space. Star Fleet II has many of the features of the original game, like crew fatigue, interaction with captives, 35 galactic regions that have 1700+ star systems. Form landing parties to boldly go where no Krellan has gone before, and use the new commands, intelligence, logistics, planetary invasion, obliterator pods to handle multiple mission objectives. The game features a large number of graphic screens to display the various information that will affect your command decisions. (ST) Release set for fall of 1987. Price T.B.A

ALIANTS (STARSOFT)

The full title is Aliants: The Desperate Battle for Earth. Once again some bug eyed monsters, in this case humanoid ant like beings, have enslaved the earths' population, and are using them to build more space ships to conquer the universe. As a lonerebel you head for earths' last outpost, The Valley Forge, where you accept the task of intercepting a ship from the aliens home planet filled with power crystals that will be used to power their new fleet. The game has well done graphics, and a simulation room to practice your shooting skills. (ST) \$T.B.A

can draft a team, and play in a 24 league against a human or computer opponent as you seek to make it to the Championship series. While the players are not based on real ones, the game does rate each player on all aspects of the game. Championship Baseball has good graphics that include base coaches, and shirtless fans sunning themselves in the stands. Unfortunately the computer is not capable of offering any strong opposition for the human player. This game is best played with two human opponents. See review for details. (ST) \$59.95 Can.

HARDBALL (ACCOLADE)

(7.5) An oldy but a goody for the XE that has been converted for the ST that also incorporates a split screen. Like Championship Baseball this is a strategy/action game that features the ability to set line ups. Unlike Championship Baseball this game uses real baseball statistics to rate its players, has a full team to work with, and a complete pitching staff so you can go through the whole bull pen if you have too. Plus the ability to direct the type of pitches your hitters will go for. (XE/ST) \$59.95 Can.

WIZARD'S CROWN (SSI)

XE owners finally get a chance to try their hand at this game that was released a while ago. While ST owners will have to wait a while to add this game to their collection. Another fantasy role-playing game that pits your party against the tyrant Tarmon who has stolen the Wizard's Crown and hidden it in the spell woven walls of Arghan. There are 8 ready made characters included or you can create your own as you search for clues. The game has a unique feature that lets you resolve battles blow by blow or let the computer quickly decide the outcome. (XE/ST) ST Release-May. \$49.95 Can.

GOLDRUNNER (MICHTRON)

An arcade style game that features some of the fastest moving graphics to date. Basically a shoot-em up game with excellent graphics, and speech synthesis similar to Starglider. However the manual leaves much to be desired in explaining what the game is all about. (ST) \$54.95 Can.

AUTODUEL (ORIGIN SYSTEM INC.)

Based on the board game Car Wars. This game puts you in a gladiator type role in the future where battles are won and lost on the road. Design your own custom road vehicle by souping it up with armor and a wide variety of weapons, and then take a mechanics course or stop over at the arena to practice your combat skills. (XE) \$69.95 Can.

COLONIAL CONQUEST (SSI)

(8) Another world domination game that first was a hit for the XE. Unlike Balance of Power this game is an introductory level game, and can be enjoyed by all ages. This game takes place during the Age of Imperialism (late 1800's to 1918) and allows for 6 players to vie for the title of greatest nation using subversion, espionage, economic aid and military might. A definite winner for the XE, and the same will hopefully be true for the ST. (ST) \$49.95 Can.

WARSHIP (SSI)

(7.5) A tactical simulation of surface combat that takes place in the South Pacific. This is not a complete naval game as Warship only concerns itself with the major ships of WW II. But with over seventy-nine ships from both major navies, Japanese and American, and minor navies, Dutch and British, and the ability to modify all aspects of the ships, and build your own scenarios makes this a true gamers delight. (XE) \$74.95 Can.

BATTLECRUISER (SSI)

(7.5) A follow up to Warship that uses the same features, including poor graphics, and abilities, but with a wider scope. Battlecruiser deals with tactical surface combat in the Atlantic during WW I and II. While the WW II data disk includes the 4 major powers ships, the WW I disk only concerns itself with British and German navies, and does not include the French, Italian, and Austrian navies. Battlecruiser is a must have game for the hard core wargamer. (XE) \$69.95 Can.

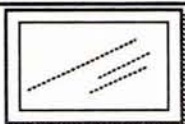
BALANCE OF POWER (MINDSCAPE)

(10) A game of geopolitics in the nuclear age, for 1 or 2 players, that lets you try your hand at being one of the superpowers. An extensive data base makes this simulation not only make Balance of Power play like the real thing, but an educational experience. Four levels of difficulty offer a range of foreign policy options to raise your prestige value, but not at the cost of a nuclear war. Probably the most innovative and thought provoking game to appear in a long time. (ST) \$59.95 Can.

(The number system: 1 for terrible, 3 for tolerable, 5 for okay, 8 for excellent, 10 for fantastic)

Keith Burnage

(c) AKA'87



WINDOW ON GAMING

Every month in this column I try to go beyond the usual game reviews that I do. I make an attempt to discuss details of gaming that are not covered extensively. But seeing as this is the last issue, and the Stanely Cup is finally (thank God!!!) over. Our thoughts can now be fully turned to the boys of summer, and recreating and/or improving their results through baseball simulation games.

Now that there are a number, albeit a small number, of baseball games for the ST and a larger number for the XE you may be wondering which one you should buy. To aid in your decision I have rated each game on various aspects of a true baseball game.

As with any "what's the best" question it all depends on what features you want to have. Do you want a true statistic based game? Do you want one with excellent graphics? Do you want the ability to compile statistics? Do you want a limited number of play options? These questions make it next to impossible to say which one is "the" best. However your choice can be narrowed down to one of two categories the current games fall into.

Action: are games that do not use statistics, and do not require any skills except deft use of the joystick. Star League Baseball (XE) is the lone representative.

Strategy/Action: are games that use statistics to a limited degree, are strong on graphics and rely on the human player to act more as a baseball player than a manager. Hardball (XE/ST) MicroLeague Baseball I (XE) and Championship Baseball (ST) all fall into this category.

Statistic: are games that place a strong reliance on statistics, by allowing you to compile and use the new statistics, and allows for you to start your own league. MicroLeague Baseball II (ST) is the sole game in this category.

League: are games that have all of the abilities of games in the Statistic category, but allow you to draft, trade, and run your own baseball league. Only Computer Baseball (XE) is capable of doing this, but the General Managers Disk for MicroLeague Baseball I, and soon for II, make it possible to use MLB for league play.

NOTE: In the case of MicroLeague Baseball I & II I have included, in the tables, options which are only available using the Box Score/Stats Compiler disk for the XE, and the General Managers Disk for both systems.

Championship Baseball (\$59.95 Can.): Gamestar, P.O. Box 7287, Mountain View, CA 94039, USA

Computer Baseball (\$49.95 Can.): SSI, 1046 N. Rengstorff Ave, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

Hardball (\$59.95 Can.) Accolade

MicroLeague I & II (\$74.95 Can.) Micro League Sports Association, 2201 Drummond Plaza, Newark, Delaware 19711-5711, USA

Star League Baseball (\$39.95 Can.): Gamestar, P.O. Box 7287, Mountain View, CA 94039, USA

PRE-GAME

Program	Stat	Teams/Plyrs	Options	
Off/Pch				
Championship BB	N[1]	O/12	D/C	3/4
Computer BB	Y	CO/25	T/D/C	12/11
Hardball	N	O/26	none	1/1
MicroLeague I	Y	CO[2]/25	T/D/C	13/10
MicroLeague II	Y	CO[2]/25	T/D/C	13/10
Star League	N	O/10	none	none

Stat: Statistic based game

Teams/Plyr: C(1986) O(other) and # of players

Options: T(trade) D(draft team) C(compile)

Off/PCH: # of statistical categories used for batters/pitchers offensive

NOTES: [1] Uses stats not based on real players
[2] Only includes the 1986 All-Star teams

POST GAME

Program	Scorecard	Compiles
Championship	L	No
Computer BB	L/B/R/13/14/1	Yes
Hardball	L	No
MicroLeague I	L/B/R/16/9/2	Yes
MicroLeague II	L/B/R/16/9/2	Yes
Star League	L	No

Scorecard: Linescore/Boxscorer/printed record of game/# offensive/pitching/defensive stats available

Compiles: Compiles stats after every game

DURING THE GAME

Program	Input	Graphics/Sound	Options	PH/PR	L/R	Events	Save Game	Players	Artificial Int.
Championship	S	Good/Yes	2/8/0/1	N/N	N	none	No	TO	Poor
Computer BB	K/S	Poor/Yes	3/3/8/3	Y/Y	Y	RI	Yes	TOB	Good
Hardball	S	Very Good/Yes	5/4/0/1	N/N	Y	none	No	TO	Fair
MicroLeague I	K	Fair/Yes	4/6/2/4	Y/Y	Y	none	Yes	TO	Good
Microleague II	K	Fair/Yes	4/6/2/4	Y/Y	Y	RPIE	Yes	TCB	Good
Star League	S	Fair/Yes	2/8/0/1	N/N	N	none	No	TO	Fair

Input: Play is controlled by keyboard or joystick effects

Graphics/Sound: Graphics quality/Sound and UUsound

Options: # of options for Batting/Pitching/Defense/Running

PH/PR: Pinch Hitters/runners can be used.

L/R: Left/right handed pitchers affect batters hitting

Events: Rain delay/Power outage/Injuries/Ejections

Players: Two player/Computer will manage one team/Computer will manage both teams

Artificial Intelligence: Level of competition you can expect from the computer

As you can see while the games are all based on the sport of baseball that is where their similarities end. Each game has its own positive and negative aspects, and depending on how true to life you want to get each game will appeal to various types of people.

the bunch. While it has some features that make it similar to Hardball, the graphics are not as well done, and if the computer were a real manager it would be selling vacuum cleaners door to door. This game is only for those who can never beat a computer opponent.

I have ranked the games in the following order. For the XE Computer Baseball and Microleague Baseball I are the cream of the crop. Unlike the other games these two take their baseball seriously. Computer Baseball will appeal to the baseball fanatic, While to get the same level of appeal with MLB I XE owners will have to buy the separate Box Score/ Stats Compiler. Harball is an inbetween game for those who want graphic action, and limited statistics, while for those who only want to swing away without concerning themselves with any kind of statistics Star League Baseball offers just as much challenge as the statistics based games. This is an easy game to learn but a hard one to master, and win.

Microleague Sports Association should have the 1986 Player disk out soon, Even though the General Managers disk for trading and drafting temas may not be out for a while I will be attempting to form an electronic Baseball League. Each manager will chose one of last years teams, and accumulated statistics will be used. All you need is an ST, a copy of MLB II, and the ability to be there on game day. I suggest we look at playing all of the games on one day in one place, but I am open to any suggestions on how to organize the league. The league will need a minimum of eight people for two divisions of four teams each. So until the next issue here's to successful gaming!

Keith Burnage

(c) AKA'87

For the ST the three games fall into the same positions. Microleague Baseball II (see review elsewhere) is the only stats based game available, but what a game! Unless Trip Hawkins at ECA decides to port over Earl Weaver Baseball for the ST, this will probably become the standard for ST owners to have. Hardball is next as the best arcade type game, and is an intermediate game for those who want to have the thrill of making the plays, instead of calling them (see last issues review for details). Championship Baseball is as the bottom of



MONTHLY COLUMN VISICLUES

by Michael D. Riley

This article -- if it catches on -- will initiate "VISICLUES", a regular column wherein all the gamers among us can trade strategies and playing hints. You won't find all the answers here, but getting even one clue to help you past a "dead end" in a game often spells the difference between a satisfying experience and utter exasperation.

Is there a need for a column such as this? Perhaps a better question would be "Is there a need among the N.C.A.U.G.?" If other publications can be used as a frame of reference, then the answer to the first question would be a definite "yes". "Current Notes" from the Washington Area Atari Computer Enthusiasts, et al, and "Family Computing" magazine both carry regular "hints" features, as does "Computer Gaming World", a publication devoted to in-depth examinations of strategy scenarios and war games. Infocom, of course, sell their "InvisiClues". (While a valuable service to many a stumped adventure player, an InvisiClues package adds substantially to the overall cost of a game. On the other hand, a growing number of publishers are including some help with their original documentation, eg. "The Pawn", from Firebird.) The number of games in any Atari store far outreaches the utility packages available. This can only mean that people buy more games. The number of video-game magazines available in the heyday of video arcades and the 2600, and other game machines, was astounding. These were packed full of articles describing how to beat even the toughest arcade-style games, taking the reader screen by screen through the steps. Not everyone can be an expert. Most programs require a substantial investment of time before the user can develop proficiency.

For a father of two youngsters -- someone like me -- the feeling is often that any time on the old 8-bit is somehow "stolen" from other familial responsibilities. Getting stuck on a puzzle, be it entertainment or programming, can spell the end of an evening. Often there are more important things (some think) to do than spend the next two hours typing "move the curtain" and "lift the curtain" and "push the curtain" and "pull the curtain" and "open the curtain" and "hit the curtain" and "burn the curtain" and finally "Kill the G.D. curtain!", and then spend 10 bucks on a call to the publisher in California only to find out you're supposed to "Draw the curtain"! By then it's midnight, the wife and kids have packed up their personal belongings and most of the furniture and left for

mother's, but hey, the game's not a bust anymore: you found the flashlight you so desperately needed, behind the curtain, so let's keep playing! I'm not suggesting that the answers to everything should be available just for the asking. In fact, I don't think I'd get any debate on that point. But, just as you would call a friend for help with a 'search file' problem in a database, wouldn't it be nice to have a source of some type for game clues? But we digress.

The answer to the second question " ...a need among the N.C.A.U.G.?" is more difficult to form. Your response -- and PLEASE take the time to respond, if you feel you have anything to offer at all -- to this article will determine that. I can only speak for myself. Of course, I have a vested interest: I love computer games. All kinds of computer games. Give me a board game that I hate, put it on a computer screen, and I'll buy it. This column will focus on adventure and strategy games. It will, however, support Q & A for any type of entertainment, for all Atari computers. Readers with other brands of computer are also welcome to exchange ideas, as there are obviously many packages that have been ported to various equipments.

Format will be as follows: a short editorial to start off each month, focussing on some aspect of gaming, be it kudos or karate-chops, or just generalizations; Feel free to offer suggestions/topics. This will be followed by a list of Questions With Answers (if I can get any); a section reserved for Questions WithOut Answers, that we hope someone reading will be able to answer; and contact people for both. We will also include a list of phone numbers of those people who would like to volunteer their expertise, so that you don't have to wait six weeks for the next issue before you get the answer you need. Just call, and ask your questions or give your answers to those questions printed. We'll also be including the names of questioners and responders, so interested readers can contact each other to glorify in the details of their respective favourites. No nicknames, please! (All letters will also be answered, if you enclose a S.A.S.E., although turn-around time will be somewhat longer.) To encourage the use of this forum for exchange, I will personally contact each and every group member over the next few weeks to establish a list of contact people. This may also be a good opportunity to conduct a quick pole to determine whether or not you'll even see this column next issue. One bright note - it will definitely be shorter than this one! Please get involved if you have any interest at all. Apart from several good home utilities that I find invaluable, entertainment takes up the majority of my time on the little box, and I know the same applies to many other people. I'm wide open to suggestions, questions, answers, anything. And we'll have fun doing it.

Now for the good part...

QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS (Infocom)

Q: Getting across the canal to various docks seems to be a matter of luck. How can I be more exact?

VISI: Movement depends on which control button is pushed. "Full Speed Ahead", for example, will send you straight across to the East side when you're coming round the first bend, and land you at the opulent dock. "Go With the Flow" will keep you drifting close to the west side of the canal. The speed chosen, however, seems to have no effect on actual number of turns used to get somewhere.

DALLAS QUEST (Datasoft)

Q: Are there any unnecessary items that I can drop before heading off into the jungle?

VISI: The money that Sue Ellen gives you is not required to win; in fact, I don't think there is any location to use it.

Q: Can the curtain in the trading post be opened? And is there a flashlight available anywhere? One of the responses in the game is "You don't have the flashlight", but I can't find it.

VISI: I called Datasoft for this one. Try "DRAW the curtain". It's the only word that works. Behind it, you will see a flashlight. (This is the kind of parser/verb puzzle that drives rational players nuts, and wastes hours of playing time. Any comments?)

JUPITER MISSION 1999 (Avalon Hill)

Q: I have analyzed all the moon, and located the source of the radio signals, but the computer says there's no reason to go to Callisto. Is it broken, or what?

VISI: You have located the correct moon, but you must now command your ship to go into orbit there. Only then can you use the landers. Get into orbit from the "navigation" screen. Beware... save the game before trying to land -- it's a toughie!

MERCENARY (Datasoft)

Q: Can you get the Web from Loc. 09-06? Where's the key for Loc.**-*? What's the Power Amp for? I can't sell it. How do I get a pass for the military hangar?

VISI: Take the kitchen sink from the Colony Craft in the sky; then you'll be able to pick up anything. Once you have the web, you'll find that it acts as a skeleton key. The Power Amp allows the Dominion Dart to pick up enough speed to get to the Colony Craft, if you haven't managed to find the Concord III by this point. Finally, the pass for the military installation is inside it, but you don't need it to get in.

MASK OF THE SUN (Broderbund)

Q: I would like to survive the gas room, find some keys (beside the black), kill a skeleton, and move some stairway debris.

VISI: Enter the gas room and go SW. I don't know where the other keys are, but you don't need them to win the game. Kill a skeleton by hitting it with the amulet. I can't move the debris either, but it's a red herring.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS (Infocom)

Q: How does one: a) Get in the orphanage; b) avoid getting a headache from the ion transmitter. Also, is it necessary to go through the labyrinth, and if so, how do you survive? Keeping track of the moves is almost impossible.

ALTERNATE REALITY (Datasoft)

Q: Is there any way to make enough money to buy a weapon so I can survive long enough to play this thing for a while?

OTHERS

Q: WHO WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THEIR NAMES AS POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION? PLEASE CALL MIKE RILEY AT 731-9292.

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TIPS & BITS

by Ed Wilton

This months TIPS & BITS article is driven by two factors. First, there is a need to acknowledge an error in last months article and second club member John Fischer gave me a little push to expand on the DOS copy capability addressed last month.

First things first. In last months column it was suggested that you could copy .DOC or .TXT files, such as those on the disk of the month, directly to your screen. The process was functionally correct as explained, but blind adherence to the syntax described in the article would not have worked. The article said to select the COPY option from DOS and then enter: DOC.TXT,"E:" As stated earlier this doesn't work. A quick reference to your DOS documentation would show that the correct syntax is: "DOC.TXT,E:" (without the quotes)

Now for the second part of this article. I recently received a diskette from John Fischer which contained the super MENU program included with the JUL/AUG 1987 NCAUG XE Disk of the Month. In addition to this MENU program, there was a short .TXT file drawing attention to the use of DOS as a mini wordprocessor. To accomplish this small feat you first need to load DOS. Once DOS is firmly in place, select the Copy option and in response to the prompt "COPY -- FROM, TO" enter the following: E:,FILENAME.DOC Then press the SHIFT-CLEAR keys to clear the screen. At this stage you can type and edit your message just as you would with any other wordprocessor. When you finish creating your message enter the combination, CONTROL-3 and your data will be saved to disk. This file can then be read to the screen using the technique described above. That is, select the copy option from DOS and then enter: FILENAME.DOC,E: Don't forget that the CONTROL-1 will pause and restart the scrolling as you read your file. One limitation with this wordprocessor is that it wraps around to the next line only when the line is full, i.e. 38 characters, without recognizing the start or end of a word. The simple solution is to force a carriage return at the end of every line.

In closing, I would like to express a hope that you all have an enjoyable summer and if you think of any good 'TIPS & BITS' while you are lulling on the beach, please give me a call when you return.

XE LIBRARY

At the last XE meeting, Bob Thompson suggested the XE librarian put an article in the newsletter each month. In his opinion this article should draw attention to the highlights of the most recent XE disk of the month. Readily recognizing a good idea, I immediately sat down at the keyboard and developed this first article. Since this was the first, I decided it should capture the highlights of the past few XE Disks of the month.

NCAUG XE DISK #18, April 1987, contained the exciting new Public Domain BASIC Interpreter received from the Atari Users Group in Holland, TURBO BASIC. It's almost too good to be true. In addition to offering 42 more commands and 22 more functions than Atari BASIC, TURBO BASIC provides the user 1603 more bytes of program space by "hiding" part of itself under the XL/XE's operating system. It also runs 3 times faster than Atari BASIC, includes most DOS commands, has advanced graphics and programming functions, and is insensitive to lower case or inverse characters for most commands. To assist you with this powerful BASIC a complete Documentation file is included on the disk.

NCAUG XE DISK #19, May 1987, continues with the TURBO BASIC theme by providing the TURBO Compiler. This compiler will increase the speed of your TURBO BASIC programs 2 to 3 times and regular BASIC programs by 10-15 times. Unfortunately, the TURBO Compiler and resultant programs will only run on the ATARI XL/XE series computers. To assist you in using the TURBO Compiler, a 39 sector documentation file is included. There is also a Run Time package included on this disk for running your compiled programs, and a useful TEXT TIDIER which has been compiled using the TURBO compiler. For those of you interested in text adventures Disk #19 contained "The Wizard's Sword", the first in a series of six text adventure programs from the now defunct SOFTSIDE Magazine.

XE DISK #20, June 1987, contains the second in the series of the 6 text adventure programs from SOFTSIDE magazines. This second adventure, from issue 39 of Softside, is entitled "IT'S ABOUT TIME". The real highlight of disk #20 is 1030 EXPRESS. This public domain program was written by Keith Ledbetter and is by far the most widely acclaimed Modem program for the Atari Modems (1030 and XM-301). A user friendly, menu driven modem program, it is considered to be the ultimate in communication

XE



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Look What You Can Do



SMALL



MEDIUM

62 SECTOR
PIC FILES

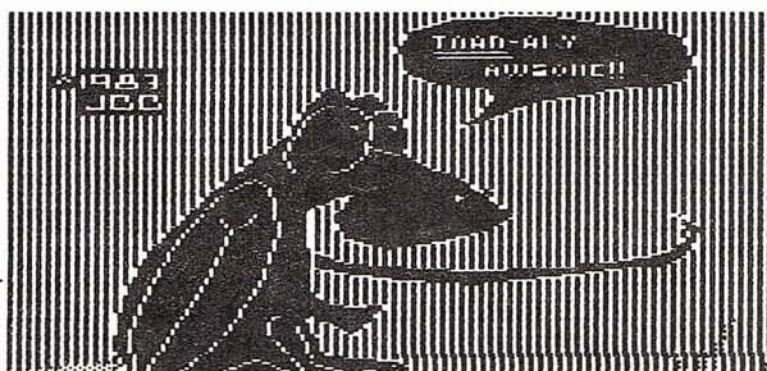
YOUR
KOALA PAD
PLUGS IN
TO PORT 2

YOUR JOYSTICK IN 1

JOHN



PRINT
ICONS
IN
THREE
SIZES



XE TIDBITS

Customer service is a great thing -- when you can get it. On two separate occasions over the last year, I've had to call Intellicreations in California, publishers of Datasoft programs, for help. The ladies on the phones there were more than happy to give me answers to my adventure game questions. It seems that they have all the answers at their disposal, just waiting for us to call. During my most recent conversation, the

staffer offered to send me (no charge) a list of hints for escaping from Target in the game "Mercenary". It arrived within the week. Now, that's service. (She also told me that for \$9.95 U.S., they will send a complete book and all playing maps for "Alternate Reality", covering both XE and ST versions.) Congrats, Intellicreations, for a job well done. I know our readers will support those who support us.

Michael Riley

Mercenary

ESCAPE FROM TARG

Reviewed by Michael D. Riley

A Flight Simulator Adventure from
DATASOFT/INTELLICREATIONS
Cdn \$39.95

Recent software releases from Datasoft of California have been increasingly impressive (in most cases). Having already played -- and lost, many times -- "Alternate Reality", a graphically entertaining game from the same firm, I was intrigued by the game-play description on the box for this one, called "Mercenary". Reviewers in two different Atari-oriented magazines had already panned the game, so I figured it was worth a look. (Well, I guess I can't hide it; you're going to find out sooner or later. I tend to regard software reviewers in the same light as I see movie critics: with a jaundiced eye. I wonder what that says about this reviewer?) More importantly, not having attempted any "Flight Simulator"-type programs before, but having witnessed numerous first-timers "crash" when play testing at the store, I was anxious to do a little flying without crashing, and this seemed like an ideal way to get in a little solo time.

One of the attractions of the Atari store that I frequent is their friendly "try before you buy" policy. I have been spared a costly investment in a boring piece of software on more than one occasion by doing a little play-testing before shelling out the bucks. Doing this is not always easy, because often -- especially with some of the newer, in-depth games -- the documentation is so heavy that one must read for an hour before one can actually take joystick in hand. Mind you, this reviewer is not complaining. I love to get scads of things to read and maps to study; they make gaming that much more interesting a hobby. But, at the store, time is usually scarce. Anyway... familiarization time is minimal for Mercenary, and I was off the ground in seconds -- and having enough fun to convince me to take it home.

Now, to the meat: Mercenary is a single-player game, utilizing both joystick and keyboard for input. Game-play style is varied, incorporating flight simulation, adventure, object hunting, puzzles, and a little bit of shoot-'em-up. As the 'mercenary' of the title, you begin the scenario

by crash-landing on the planet Targ. Through messages provided by your personal, portable computer, you learn of the opportunity to escape the planet by acting as an agent for one side or the other of the warring factions presently occupying the planet.

You are first presented with the option of buying or stealing a ship with which to fly around the planet. The game instructions suggests you may be in trouble if you steal, so I didn't try it, although you lift everything else in the game and no one blows you away, so who knows? This player hopped in his Dart and took off to the skies. The graphics in this game are quite well done, representing a sort of see-through 3D effect. Everything is linear, though, and this is part of the reason for poor reviews; perhaps we have become jaded over time, or perhaps the allure and glitter of the 16-bit machine's graphics leaves us a tad cynical. Whatever the case, in terms of execution (that is, visual design and interest-holding level), and sheer speed, the graphics here rival anything I've seen in "Flight Simulator II". Once you've had a taste of flight, it's time to go underground and do some serious spelunking.

The documentation provides you with basic playing techniques, and states simply that your goal is to escape from the planet. How you are to do this, exactly, is not described, but you are told that there are three ways to achieve this freedom: figuring out how to do it is the basis of the game. (It is also suggested that because of the multiple endings one could play forever; I don't think your interest level will stay that high, especially after you've found one of the ways out.) Provided with the short instruction manual are an assortment of maps giving (almost complete) layouts of the underground complexes and the Colony Craft in the sky. Slipped in was a

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single page giving some special descriptions of the compass operation on your personal computer. It operates in a pretty strange fashion and makes getting around just that much more difficult. I found this added to the enjoyment, because it kept me on my toes.

I do have one complaint about the documentation. So many companies, even with the advent of the special effort made by some of the better software distributors, don't seem to care too much about the "feel" of the game. They spend almost no time at all with the background to the story, thinking instead that we just want to jump in and play. Yet the programs themselves often belie this type of thinking on the part of the purchasers. They buy a "deep" game, they want a "deep" experience. Well, maybe not too deep. In any case, in *Mercenary* the set-up is less than one page long. It sketches in the basics, then you're into the rules. This adventure in particular would have benefitted from a fuller description of the planet, its population and the enemies that have overrun it. At the same time a few more seeds of information could have been planted, for instance the fact that the Mechanoids (one of the warring races) must be metallic in origin, thus, when you find the metal detector, you know that you can use it to tell the Mechanoids from the Palyers (the other warring race). Not that this kind of clue is needed: it's just that at that point in the game one would have gotten a certain satisfaction of having completed the circle, so to speak. Ah, but I ramble.

Initially, playing *Mercenary* seems quite simple. Items that you find in the underground can be sold to either side for credits. These credits can then be used toward your escape, and objects seem to be plentiful. Eventually, though, you find that you're missing a crucial key, or one of the transporters seems to be malfunctioning... the plot thickens. Various types of transportation, both ground and air, are tucked away in places you just might find, and you can move from complex to complex either by air or by underground transporter. This feature alone makes *Mercenary* different and more enjoyable.

While in the air you can take pot-shots at any of the structures that dot the City through which you have been searching. Blasting certain buildings will anger one side or the other, and they'll send droid ships out to stop your interloping. Don't expect arcade action here; the style is more of interlude than anything else, although it is one more feature that makes the game a little different. And, of course, not every location can be reached underground. One in particular can only be found from the air until much later in the game, so locating a faster craft becomes important. And it is this unusual location that exposed what could be a bug in the program.

When your craft is high in the air, locations generally appear as dots on the planet surface. In order to find location 'X', this reviewer would often fly to the general area, which is quite large, and then head straight up into the stratos. By then heading down again, the location could often be spotted. This saved a lot of time flying around at low level. But for some reason, every so often the dot would disappear as my craft got closer to it. I finally isolated the occurrences to only those two versions of the game I had "saved" from previous play. Starting the game from scratch (a major pain), or loading other saved games, didn't create this unusual disappearance. Several hours were spent trying to find the location using every possible method of approach I could think of, but to no avail. Ah, well... one bug don't break a winner.

Having collected and sold numerous items, including gold, medical supplies, a power amp, a few ground vehicles, a kitchen sink (very important), a winchester drive and a photon transmitter (a.k.a. a flashlight), one finds the intent of the game beginning to take shape. This is half the fun, so I won't give away any more. Suffice to say that playing time can involve many hours of intense activity, and should keep you going for weeks. Included is a "save game" feature, which is extremely helpful. Up to 10 games can be saved, which allows you to experiment, much as you would in a text adventure. Some transporters, for example, are one-way only, and if you enter the wrong one you could easily get lost. Saving before you try will give you a second chance.

Recommended? You bet. This is a unique experience. Play is involving. It's thought-provoking and stimulating, as all good "puzzles" should be. And the author has thrown in enough humorous touches to give you a chuckle just when you need one. For instance, along the outskirts of the city are a number of buildings and odd-looking signs, one of which is obviously the Atari logo. I fired a round at it, and after the sign collapsed, this message was flashed on my computer: "Traitor!". Shortly after, I laid to waste a Commodore sign and got "Good Show!".

The adventure is fairly big in scope and is tough enough to keep you going for a while. And like all strategy games, it can be both frustrating and satisfying. This reviewer has managed to escape Targ (I found the easy way off), and I'm anxious to try "The Second City", which requires the master disk from game one. I see upon opening the package that no maps or hints are included! I think I better hold off a while before I get into this one, or my family may start looking for a new Dad.

Next time, we'll look at "Triple Pack", a repackaging of three multi-scenario arcade-type shooting games, from Access software.

ST PRESIDENTIAL BYTES

by TED MCNICOL

Welcome back. Or welcome me back. I must apologise for missing the last meeting, but my company sent me off to the West Coast to fight godless heathens or something. I scoured computer stores in Vancouver and up and down the island in search of ATARI news; in my spare time, of course.

I did get the opportunity to check out a few of the ATARI stores in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island (only 11 of the 15 I knew of). For those of you who travel or plan to travel out there, A & B Sound and Compucentre are the only "chains" carrying ST quality equipment.

However, I quickly discovered the best stores in Vancouver were the small "hole-in-the-wall" variety, where they were much more committed to supporting our unique product.

DATA TUNE, at 2547 Kingsway, is a must for visitors, as they carry a complete line of hardware and software for the ATARI and that other 16-bit interloper. They also support MIDI, being a music store as a sideline, or are they a computer store as a sideline. They are working on licensing a light pen they developed, and have a graphics tablet in the works. They also showed me a SONY TRINITRON (Model CPD130Z), which they have fitted with a switch to use as a single 3-resolution monitor. The potential sales price will be in the \$1000 range. In software, they had PHASAR, a single-entry GEM accounting package from ANTIC's Catalog, as well as other current items.

SUPERSOFTWARE, on #3 Road in Richmond, only carries software, and had Guild of Thieves (Rainbird), Plutos (a Galaxian game), and a 3-D pool game, much earlier than other stores in Vancouver or in Ottawa. There are other excellent stores, such as WIZARD, at 6082 Fraser Street and T & P Home Entertainment at 5068 Kingsway. At T & P, I watched the VANATARI BBS SYSOP in action.

There are 2 separate ST groups in Vancouver, and I am not sure of how many 8-bit groups still exist. While at the stores, I gave away a couple of promo copies of BYTOWN BYTES. It was gratifying to see that they were already aware of it and eager to get the latest issue. This speaks highly of Bob's efforts to put out a quality mag, with timely news and great articles.

I promised Bob that I wouldn't take up too much space with my article, so I will wrap up with my wishes for a safe and happy summer. See you on July 28th.

CHEAP UPGRADE FOR YOUR SINGLE SIDED DRIVE

By Nobby Obukuro



For those 520ST owner who wished they had bought a double sided double density drive (DSDD) in the first place rather than fork out another \$500.00 for the Atari version, there is hope for around \$175.00. Last week I got the 3.5 inch drive that is used in the IBM XT & AT units from ALI Computers and installed it directly in my 520 unit. This is the Panasonic model JU364 floppy drive unit. Being made in Japan, it had the standard connectors and mounting hole positions that Atari used. Installation is simply removing 8 screws, connect the drive, cut the old cover with a coping saw for the new pushbutton and LED to show and replace cover - that simple.

One word of caution - be sure the internal jumpers on the bottom are still on the factory settings, i.e. DR, DC, M0 & D0. This unit will give you IBM XT and AT compatibility when PC Ditto is available. It is capable of stepping to track 83 for those who are so inclined. Good luck with your new drives and keep on tracking.

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Don Krentz 829-6366

ST Tips

by Bob Deskin

Not a real tip but a strong word of warning. If you inadvertently copy a file over itself you will probably ruin the file. When you select the file for copying and drag it into an area that is in the same directory, either the root or a folder, you will get an alert box warning you of the name conflict. It basically shows you the old name and the new name (both the same of course), and asks you to provide a new name and click on OK. Alternatively, you can click on Cancel to stop the copy. Normally this works well, but there is no check that you have in fact changed the name. If you simply click on OK without changing the name, the file is copied to itself with disastrous consequences for the file. Programs will not run (you get TOS error #35), and text files will be incomplete. I consider this a bug in TOS since you shouldn't be allowed to damage files this easily. This is another reason to ensure that ALL your files are backed up.

On the subject of backups, I know people that keep two backup copies of important files (giving a total of three copies). Don't laugh, they're not being paranoid. What's the first thing you do when you lose a file - put in the backup copy, of course. You typically copy the backup onto your original disk or another new disk. But what happens if the disk drive is at fault (admittedly rare, but it can happen). There goes your backup. If you have a second backup you're saved, because you never use that third backup unless you're absolutely sure it's safe. If you've just lost the original plus the first backup, you're just not going to risk that last copy. Now three copies of a public domain game may not be worthwhile, but an extra copy of that big mailing list or the great Canadian novel might not be amiss. And no, I don't get any disk royalties.

Every now and then there is talk about setting the keyclick off or setting the default colour palette. These are settings that are usually done with the control panel, which is a desk accessory. There seems to be some confusion about what the DESKTOP.INF file saves and does versus what the control panel does. All the settings for the desktop are saved in the DESKTOP.INF file. These include the control panel, the install printer, and the RS232

port configuration settings. Also saved are the window sizes and locations, and the desktop icon information. The DESKTOP.INF file is, however, only a file of data. It must be referenced by a program to be of any use. Now GEM and TOS make use of much of the information for the desktop layout, but all those control panel settings are not touched. To have the keyclick set and the colour palette, a program is needed that reads the information and sets the values in the system tables. Normally this program is the control panel desk accessory. Unfortunately, the standard control panel accessory takes two accessory slots (out of the six available) and takes about 19K of memory. There is a public domain desk accessory called ROCP (for Read Only Control Panel) that reads and sets the control panel information but only takes one slot. It takes about 14.5K so the memory savings is not great. Another alternative is a program that sets the values from commands to the program rather than from the DESKTOP.INF file. One such public domain program is called STARTUP. The bottom line is that you don't get these settings for free. If you don't like the defaults, you'll have to have a program or desk accessory that sets your preferences when booting.

Another area of confusion is the AUTO folder. An AUTO folder is a folder named AUTO in the root directory (as A:\AUTO\). TOS will look at the contents of an AUTO folder on the disk in the A drive when booting. Any program with a PRG extension will be executed. There are many possibilities such as prompting for the date and time, or loading files into a RAM disk. There are also some restrictions. One is the PRG extension. Files or programs with other extensions (like TOS) are ignored. Also programs are executed in the order in which they were copied into the AUTO folder, regardless of the sequence when listing the directory. Most importantly, programs in an AUTO folder cannot make use of GEM, because it has not been loaded at the time the AUTO folder is used. This means that menus and file selectors are not available. It also means that you can't take just any program and pop it into an AUTO folder to make it execute immediately on startup.

Telecommunications

ST Base Bulletin Board System

- A review and tutorial by Jonathon Longman

ST Base BBS, created by our club member, Sylvain Gagnon, is a stunning addition to the line up of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) available to the Atari ST line of computers. Its list of features and commands are incredible and the author enthusiastically keeps adding many new features. There are more features available than available for the Michtron BBS.

The BBS offers a graduated scale of user-friendliness that provides detailed prompting or can be upgraded so that an expert user can use the BBS with little waste of time. The expert is not presented with a list of prompts while the novice is given the full word for each command available at that point in the program. The some help level gives just the first letter of the available command. Help is available for all commands, any time, anywhere. The help can be from just listing the menu by pressing return to a detailed description of each command by pressing ?.

The Message section offers the standard features (see the accompanying command diagram). A lot of the commands are intuitive, and easy to use, but if the sysop opts not to use a ram disk or hard drive, the operation of the BBS slows down. Under the Header command it is possible to thread back to the original message in a series, to see a whole message and to increment along the thread (-,+). Locate allows you to find a message by a search field or string (Message string). Bring back message does not recover a deleted message (as stated in ST-Log #13), but brings back a message previously sent, to Edit or Modify. With this command you can continue or update information that was not in your original copy. As soon as this is activated you are in the edit menu so you can use all the edit commands. Modify allows the user to edit the line, without retyping the whole thing. You have the option to insert or remove characters, carriage returns, phrases and other whole bits and pieces. Powerful editor, and one that is used throughout the system, for upkeep of the BBS. Ever need to add comments, or you just forgot a small detail that would require a new message and waste space? Use this, it saves time and room. Although this is a powerful feature, there is a price to pay. It is not the simplest system to use and, if you can, I can only suggest you print

out what commands are used, and which symbols are used for modifying, if you have a buffer capture on, or use the diagram that is part of this article. If you wanted to modify the following line, the BBS would print it, then put the cursor under it, and before you enter it, would look like this:

```
Thiss is aline witha lotta mtakes. I'll fix it up
#      &          &          %is%  @      !
```

Would result in:

This is a line with a lotta mistakes.
I'll fix it up!

The basic format of this example was taken from the manual, and I tried doing this. It is not easy, because the features almost work too well, and take some getting used to. A lot of mistakes can be made if you are not sure about exactly where to put the edit symbols. If a user enjoys to get into one BBS editor, this is one to learn. However for the first few times you use it, do it step by step, command by command, and see the results of what you have done, so you can find out whether you have totally destroyed the line, or fixed it! If you delete characters and then insert a carriage return (the @ sign) the place of the <CR> will change with deletions and insertions, so it is easier to do that as the last step. Another problem is that this feature is not entirely correct. My example doesn't work as stated. First of all the inserted carriage return screws it up.

The Game section shows a lot of potential. It has the hot-keys (featured throughout the BBS) which allows you to execute a function without reading the whole menu. The current games available on NCAUG ST are Blackjack and Poker, but these are not public domain. It is disappointing that there is no information given on what commands are necessary to make your own game in the manual.

Never ending story is an area where users can add to create a sometimes amusing story. A bad-word dictionary can keep certain words out of the story. Should a particular user be picked on, you can enter his name and it will not permit anyone to enter that users name. A minimum of about 40 characters must be entered before it saves can be saved.

The File section is the best I've EVER seen! Read directory, New file list, previewing text files with Type feature, display the data of an ARCD file (like size, etc), and a feature that will guarantee people upload software ... a download ratio. In order to download you must have "permission", and to acquire permission you must upload files. A suggested rate is 1/20, which means for every kilobyte

you upload, you can download 20 more. The rate can be modified should the sysop decide so. What it all comes down to is, "Support the BBS and the BBS supports you."

The File section currently supports protocols Raw, Ascii, Xmodem checksum, Xmodem CRC, Xmodem 1 kilobyte checksum and Xmodem 1 kilobyte CRC. The 1 kilobyte protocols transfer faster because error checking takes place less often, but if an error is made the whole block must be sent again, so beware on noisy lines. The New file command is not mentioned anywhere in the manual, but presents itself in the sub file menu. It shows which downloadable files have been added recently.

For the new sysop, the BBS is simple to set up, as the basic needs are explained in the setup file, and then given in more detail in the manual. When the setup file is initiated, it will automatically create any necessary folders. A very useful feature is the Display BBS' statistics which gives a graphic display of the activity of the BBS on an 80 column display. This also displays the baud rate most used, when the system was set up, and the most downloaded file.

SYSOP UTILITIES

The author has created a system that allows the editor to be used throughout the BBS. If you want to create a new bulletin, a new never ending story, a new file, from a remote terminal, it can all be done from the same editor that exists throughout the system, which, if you are familiar with, is extremely powerful. The files are specially compacted, but a reformatter is supplied on disk.

The Switch application feature allows the sysop to run another program on his computer without terminating from the BBS program. This allows you to run a different program, even if it uses GEM without exiting the program. These programs may be .TOS, .PRG, .APP, or .TTP. Some programs that run are VIP GEM, STWriter, all of the accessory programs included, and many more. Once you exit the program it goes back to the BBS, without re-loading from disk. I have layered the BBS 3 times! The practical purpose of layering is beyond me, but it's interesting, and while you are in the other program the modem will be given a busy signal. Although the sysop can access all utilities remotely, using Switch application to run programs that do not recognize modem input/output will leave the system in trouble. Switch application seems to have a little trouble with GDOS. Any program that looks for GDOS causes the system to crash. If you have exited an one GEM application and try to run another, the system has trouble. VIP GEM would not

update the screen behind the windows properly when it was the second program, leaving a mess. This only occurs occasionally but, it would be disturbing if it forced the BBS to crash. Switch application will not support GEM programs if booted from an AUTO folder.

The manual that comes with the BBS is great. It is very comprehensive and well written by Craig Tremblay, another NCAUG member with excellent descriptions of each command. Included is an area for error messages which tell you what the problem is. Each area used by the BBS has its own address, so the sysop can pinpoint the problem, and attempt to remedy the situation. There are three pages of error messages providing detailed descriptions. The sysop can see the statistics and information of the user currently on-line. It provides the user's pseudonym, real name, password, telephone number, priority level, how long they've been on and how long they have left, download limit, how much they've downloaded, how much they uploaded, how many credits left and how many credits used. The alarming thing about this feature is that all that is necessary to get someone's password is to press the right key, so the sysop's system should be in a secure area.

ST BASE provides support on their "Mother BBS", which is our own NCAUG ST BBS. This will help our clubs' national and international notoriety.

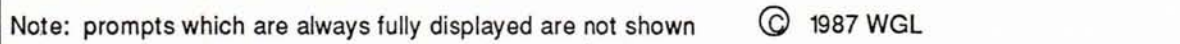
The Bulletin Board System has been changed into a fine art, no longer used simply for messages as it used to be, but used for communication, making it as easy as possible for beginners, yet still useful for the advanced. The local BBS' have been carrying messages about BBS' lately. They say that some people like some boards, some hate them. So in the end the final decision is yours, but hopefully this review will help you perceive some of ST BASE's finer points. But find out for yourself, give us a call.

Incidentally this article was written on STWriter on a monochrome monitor with Hi-res flip-flop on, within the BBS using the Switch Application feature.

ST BASE BBS
1ST BASE SOFTWARE
48 Amherst Crescent
Nepean Ontario Canada K2J 1V9
Price: \$50(US) \$70(CDN)

Mother BBS and NCAUG ST BBS
(613)231-3411

Thanks go to Craig Tremblay and Sylvain Gagnon of 1ST BASE SOFTWARE for the loan of the BBS software, and for answering all questions.



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HARDBALL!

Reviewed by: Tommy Robbs

I recently got hooked on Hardball! for the Atari ST. The game is by Accolade, and designed by Bob Whitehead. This is the most realistic baseball game I've seen on the market. The game has superb graphics! You step up to the plate and try to knock the ball out of the park. You have the choice of bunting, stealing a base, and also controlling base runners. When your team is in the field, you can choose the type and location of the pitch as well as the location of the fielders. You can play a 1 player game against the computer, a 2 player game against your friend, or even watch the computer play against itself. The two teams are the All-Stars (red in color) and the Champs (blue in color). You can choose who is the home team and who is the visitors, and whether or not you want a designated hitter (someone who bats in place of the pitcher). You can play with joysticks or a mouse. When in the field, your pitcher has 4 different pitches he can pitch. The batter, too, has to make a decision, he can bunt, hit the ball and try for a base hit or more, or steal a base (if there is a man on base to do so). Next the pitcher selects a pitching zone to pitch to out of 9 zones.

2 1 2	X = always a strike
1 X 1	1 = high probability of being a strike
2 1 2	2 = low probability of being a strike

The chart shows the 9 pitching zones and their probability of being a strike. If a runner decides to steal or run, he cannot change his mind once he starts running. There are 8 different pitches altogether. They are:

- Fastball (straight and very fast)
- Fastball (straight and fast)
- Offspeed (straight) - Change-up (straight slower pitch)
- Curve ball (abigsweeping curve) *for left handed pitchers, the ball curves left *for right handed pitchers, the ball curves right.

ball curves left.

- Screwball (opposite of a curve ball) *for left handed pitchers, the ball curves left *for right handed pitchers, the ball curves right.
- Sinker (breaks downward)
- Slider (fast breaking curve)

After the ball has been hit the left or right side of the field will be shown according to the side the ball is in. The fielder closest to the ball will blink, then you can make the fielder run to the ball using the mouse or the joystick. Once the fielder has got the ball he can choose to throw it to 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, or to home plate. There are 4 screens displayed during Hardball!. They are the Manager's Decision Screen, the Pitcher/Batter Screen, Left Field view, and Right Field view. On the Manager's Decisions Screen, there is a line up of the players on both teams, including their position, how they bat (left, right, or switch) and their batting average. Also on the screen are these choices for the two teams:

For the team in the field (defense) there are 5 listed choices:

- Player Substitution
- Exchange Positions
- Outfield (Normal, Shift right, or Shift left)
- Infield (Normal or Double Play)
- (No) Intentional Walk

For the team at bat (offense) there are 3 listed choices:

- Player Substitution
- Exchange Positions
- Switch hit (if appropriate)

This is truly the most exciting and most detailed baseball game I've played. There is also an 8 bit version of Hardball! So until next time,

PLAY BALL!!

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL

Championship Baseball, from Gamestar, is the second strategy/action baseball game for the ST. It can be played by one or two players, and requires a color monitor. Championship baseball is another 8-bit/8-bit conversion plus. The plus meaning that there are added features that makes it a) stand out from the 8-bit version, and b) takes advantage of the STs capabilities.

This enhanced ST version of the 8-bit game, Star League Baseball, comes across as a winner in print, but this does not carry over to the real thing. There are many individual aspects of this game that are well done, and one that is not, but the game as a whole falls short.

GRAPHICS

Visually Championship Baseball is not lacking. The graphics in this game, like the other sports games from Gamestar, look very good right down to a few fans sunning themselves in the stands, and the shadow of a fly ball racing across the ground. As with the other strategy/action baseball game, Hardball, Championship Baseball uses multiple screens, to a lesser degree than Hardball, in the game.

On the left hand side is a view showing the infield, this screen is identical to the one used in the original game, while the right hand half of the screen depicts a catchers eye view of the batter and the pitcher. When the ball is hit the right hand screen goes away to allow for a full view of the field. Now the purpose of the close up screen on the right side is to aid you in hitting the ball, but for me this screen served very little use.

While the two screens give you two perspectives of the incoming pitch, with the close screen shows you the pitch starting on the outside, etc., and the side view screen showing if the ball is high, low or down the middle. However you do not have enough time to switch between the two views, and so you must stick to one screen. With the close up screen it is difficult to do anything but bunt using this screen. I went back to playing this game the way I did on the original version, which proved to be much more successful. Not only that, but compared to the close up screen found in Hardball the amount of detail is not as good, the amount of detail and blocky figures make this screen suffer. The only thing I found the right hand screen good for was stealing bases.

As we all know base stealing is an art all to itself. But against the computer, in Championship Baseball, base stealing, and the game of baseball do not resemble what takes place in the real world. When you can steal second base on every pitch you know something is not right.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Fortunately Championship Baseball does allow for two players, and only in the two player mode will you have any real challenge. Nearly every game I have played has had a computer opponent who gave me a run for my money. The artificial intelligence of this "new and improved" version is lacking. In the original game the computer played a mean game, and it was something to celebrate when you beat the

computer. Gamestar in those early days rewarded anyone who could beat the computer. With this new version it is the computer who should be rewarded. When you are able to win every game by twenty runs you soon tire of the game very fast. In my case there was only one game that had a score anywhere near a real baseball score (8-2). All of my other games had a 9 run advantage by the second inning. In fact the only challenge in playing against the computer was seeing how high I could drive the score.

This high score problem is largely due to the A.I. of the program. The computer made no effort to catch a player in a run down. It is very simple to have a player run halfway between the bases, and then go back to the base they started from time after time. Not only does the computer play defensive baseball badly it also does the same when on the offensive. It will not have its players stretch a single into a double even when it can do it safely. Nor will it attempt to steal a base. For those who want a challenging game against a computer opponent your best bet is either Hardball or MicroLeague Baseball.

I was surprised that a company like Gamestar, which has put out good games in the past, would let this product out especially since most games are played on a solitaire basis. For anyone who has trouble winning at computer games Championship Baseball this is the game to buy. If it was not for the problem with the artificial intelligence this game would be strong competition for Hardball. It is a shame that the A.I. is so poor since Championship Baseball has many unique features that make it stand out from Hardball.

One major improvement over the original 8-bit version is that Championship Baseball, while not a stats based game does rate the players on a scale of 1 to 3 on various aspects. For pitchers the areas are Speed, Control, and Stamina. While for the other players the areas are style of hitting, Liner or Slugger, Batting, Catching, Running, and Throwing. Even though these figures are much simpler than using RBIs, ERAs, etc. these ratings do have an impact on how you are going to pitch to an opposing player, what sort of line up you will create, and which players you will draft.

MANAGING A TEAM

Perhaps this game's most positive feature is that you can play the part of a manager to the hilt. How much of a manager depends upon whether you want to just play a game or take part in league action. For an individual game you can only use either one of the teams already included with the game, or draft your own team, and set the line up to your preferences. In league play you have to draft your own team, although the choice for each position is limited to a couple of choices.

The league play option is a welcome change from just playing a game with no result other than winning or losing. In league play only the top teams in the four divisions can go on to the playoffs, and if you have the skill of a Sparky Anderson all the way to the Championship series. A welcome addition, and one I wished more sports games would incorporate as it gives you something to strive for, besides increasing the life of a game as you attempt to establish a sports dynasty.

There are two restrictions with using the league option. The first is in drafting a team. You can only have one relief pitcher, and if you go to him too early, and he loses his stuff you are stuck with him until the end of the game. The other is that the league play option is only a solitaire option which limits the possible enjoyment this game could offer if it at least let two players compete in different divisions. And as the artificial intelligence of this program is lacking having a perfect season on your first attempt is not impossible. On the other hand Championship Baseball does have a couple of unique features over Hardball and MicroLeague Baseball. Should you be successful in guiding your team to a championship season your team is added to the built in teams, and next time around you will have to pit your new team against your old team. Also the computer will not allow you to use the same pitcher two games in a row. Instead it will automatically alternate between the two starters you drafted. So while not a true stats based game it does have some of the features of the real thing.

PLAY BALL !!!!

The one big plus with Championship Baseball is that it is so easy to play. All of the inputs, offensive and defensive plays you make are done with the joystick. Batting is accomplished using the fire button to either swing away or lay down a bunt, with the stick used to have your men on base take a lead or steal. Of course learning how to hit does take some time, and fortunately Championship Baseball has a batting practice option that lets you hone your batting skills, while learning which pitches to go after.

On the defensive side the eight positions of the stick is used for the pitches. One change from the original 8-bit game is that in it there was some variation in the pitches the built in pitchers had. With this new version all of the pitchers throw the same stuff. Fielding, once you get the hang of it is also very easy. The computer activates the player who has the best chance of catching the ball, and because this game displays the whole field, fielding errors are not as frequent as those in Hardball. All you have to do is have the activated player intercept the ball. In the case of a fly ball you have to have the player and the ball's shadow coincide with each other. Control in this game is about as complex as tying your shoe laces for the first time. Some difficulty at first, but once you have become proficient at it, it becomes second nature.

GOOD ON PAPER, BUT ON THE FIELD..

Championship Baseball while a good game is nothing truly spectacular. It does stand out from the original 8-bit version in the areas of graphics, has a wider scope with the league play option. And it does take advantage of the ST's capabilities. On the one hand it has many features that make it a winner, ease of use, league play and fielding, but it also has flaws that detract from its positive side. A very poor computer opponent, which would not be so bad if you were able to play against a human opponent every time, and a solitaire league option combined with the computer opponent defeats this game's best feature. The game, as a whole, just does not come off as good as it sounds, and when you take into account that Championship Baseball and Hardball go for the same price the choice becomes obvious.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL
from Gamestar
for the ST (color monitor)
priced at \$59.95 Can.

reviewed by Keith Burnage

(c) AKA'87

MicroLeague Baseball II

It's the bottom of the second inning in the 1986 All Star game. Ozzie Smith is on first, and Roger Clemens is behind 2 and 1 in the count to Gary Carter. Clemens winds up, here's the pitch and Carter pops a blopper up the middle. Barfield isn't going to get to it! Ozzie dives into second, here's the throw. Safe!! Wait a minute, Ozzie looks like he hurt himself on that play, and the trainer is being called out. Let's hope it's nothing serious folks, while we pause for station identification.....

There are 3 baseball simulation games out for the ST, but if you are looking for a game that has the endorsement of the Major League Players Association, and puts you in the hot seat of a major league manager there is only one game you should buy. MicroLeague Baseball II (MLB II), from MicroLeague Sports Association, is the latest XE conversion for the ST, but unlike the other two baseball game conversions this one really takes dvantage of the STs extra memory.

The first indication that the people at MLSA have done justice to this conversion is that MLB II is actually two programs. The actual game, and a Box Score/Stats Compiler that was sold seperately for the XE. In the ST version, the game and Box Score are on one disk, and the Stats Compiler is on a seperate disk. While the Box Score/Stats Compiler is identical to the 8-bit version, the actual game has had several additional features added to it that make it a true baseball simulation game.

THE GAME

Where most baseball games have put emphasis on playing the game rather than managing a team, MLB II does not. This is due to the fact that MLB II is a statistic driven game using real players from the past to todays record setters. Because of the heavy reliance placed on statistics you do not decide what a player will do, but can only give general directions, bunt, steal, fastball, curve ball, whether the player will do what you ask all depends on his ability, not yours.

While Championship Baseball and Hardball allow you to decide what sort of pitch, and offense you will employ the choices are limited. MLB II has 16 possible play options to choose from. Besides deciding whether you want to use a designated hitter in the game, you also decide which of the four pitches you will have your pitcher attempt, you can also do a pitchout, intentionally walk a hot batter, have the first and third basemen move in to reduce the chances of a successful bunt, bring the infield in.

This attention to making this game play like the real thing carries over to when you are on the offense. In MLB II you can decide instruct your base runners on whether you want them to steal, take extra bases aggressively or cautiously. The choices for what you want the batter to do are restricted to swinging away, bunt or sacrifice bunt. I was surprised that you could not instruct a batter to perform a sacrifice fly, but this could be a built in ability when you have a man on third and less than two out as I have had batters perform a sacrifice fly when I wanted to use that play. Without a doubt the one thing this game is not lacking is realism!

Now with some games the more options you have, the more commands you have to utilize in the correct sequence. MLB II gets around this possible problem by having a simple menu procedure to get the game going. Before any game you will want to get a staring pitcher, and line up, and MLB makes this task very simple by offering a preset starting pitcher, and line up. The information on all of the pitchers and hitters is accessed through the <S> key to See more stats. This gives you the same sort of information a manager has at his finger tips. Should you wish to use another pitcher or rearrange the batting order it is a simple as using the <R> key to replace a player. And just like a real manager you can alter substitute players, send in pinch hitters and runners as required.

Once the national anthem has been played MLB reduces the commands for the eight offensive and defensive plays to the number keys, 1 thru 8, with the number 9 reserved for taking you back to see either your line up or the opposing teams. The one thing I wish this game displayed was the RBI of the batters as they come to the plate, ala Hardball. In MLB II you can get this information by either looking at the opposing teams line up or writing down the line up so you can intentionally walk George Brett. One thing to watch out for when playing MLB II, in the two player option, is that each player will have to turn away from the keyboard so that the other player is going to use.

One good aspect of MLB II is that the computer offers you the type of challenge you want from a good computer game. One interesting idea is that when playing MLB II solitaire you can set both teams starting pitchers, and line ups, but once the computer's line up is set you cannot change it. This offers you the chance to replay specific match ups (remeber gaem 7 of the '86 World Series?) or try pitching battles between Roger Clemens and Cy Young

Of course there are a lot of people who wonder what if, and MLB II lets you try out all sorts of possible scenarios through the built in teams that come with the game. Twenty-five teams, mostly from the past are on the game disk. You get teams like A.L. and N.L. All-Time Greats, the famous '27 Yankees, '55 Washington Senators, and last years All Star teams. While there these teams will keep any baseball aficionado happy and busy, I would have liked to have seen the inclusion of last years teams, especially the pennant contenders. Instead you have to buy the Player Stats/Team disk for the most recent season separately. The one positive trade off is that you get all 26 teams for a specific year on one disk.

If there is one area that MLB II is not as polished as the other baseball games for the ST it is in the area of graphics. Once the game is underway the line ups are replaced by a 3D representation of a baseball field. While the detail is not as good as Championship Baseball or Hardball they still are good when compared to other statistic based games graphics. Unlike some of those games MLB IIs graphics do have the shadow of the baseball, runners do run and slide, and when you want to start the bull pen or pull a pitcher the manager actually walks out to the mound. As if this was not enough there is also a commentary box for the built in announcer to provide typical cliché remarks whenever the ball is hit. This feature more than makes up for this games lack of fancy graphics, and adds to the excitement of playing this simulation.

While the original MLB I for the 8-bit system had all of the above features, MLB II goes beyond to add even more realism. One excellent addition is the status of pitchers in the bull pen. In this version you can see whether a pitcher is cold, warm or tired, this aids you in deciding when you can pull your starter or when to shut the bull pen down to keep your relief pitchers fresh. Another added feature is that no two stadiums are alike, and MLB II takes into account Stadium factors. You are told what the dimensions of the home teams field are, and if you are playing on natural or artificial turf. This in turn affects how the ball will behave in the game. And that is not all. The possibility of players getting injured, and if the player can stay in the game or has to be replaced, has been added to the ST version, there is also the possibility of a manager being ejected, rain delays or power outages.

The last two game features affect how the game can be played. The first is used in the two player mode that lets you turn your team over to the computer should one person be unable to finish the game, but you can easily use the Save Game option if you want to maintain absolute control over your

team. The other feature, Quik-Play, lets you have a quick game with the computer managing both teams and no graphics, but a line and box score in record time, and is best used with the Stats compiler utility.

BOX SCORE/STATS COMPILER

The game portion of MLB II lets you see how successful you are at the game of baseball with real players under real conditions. Since you are the manager in this game you may have wondered how altering the batting line will affect a players individual performance or how a seldom used starting pitcher would fare with more use, the Box Score/Stats Compiler (BSSC) utilities included with MLB II gives you the answers to the above questions.

This built in utility has three functions of which one is tied directly to the game, Box score, while the other two, Stats Compilation and use Compiled Stats operate separately from the game.

You can accumulate statistics for either your favorite team or for every team you manage and play against. The BSSC can store accumulated statistics for 32 teams. The calculations and updating of statistics are handled by the program. All you have to do is decide whether you want to compile the statistics for both teams after a game, if you have not previously compiled statistics for a team(s) you have to enter the team name and year you will save the statistics under, and whether you want to get a print out or see the statistics on screen.

While a printer is not necessary to use these utilities, as statistics can be displayed on the screen, a print out makes life easier rather than writing down the information or trying to remember the various statistics. A printer is essential if you plan to make decisions about who will be on the line up and where they will be in the batting order.

The See or Printout Stats option has 5 displays (see figure 1) that cover everything you want to know about a team or particular player from a players position to the number of times they have struckout. While for pitchers the information ranges from whether they are a starter or reliever, and what their earned run average is.

One very good feature is that you can pick which displays you want to print out, but one draw back is that there is no command to allow you to print all of the displays. Instead you have to call up each display on screen, and tell the program to print it, then move on to the next display, print it, etc. Also because of this minor flaw, if you want to print all of the hitters statistics you have to roll the page back to fit those three on one page.

1986 TORONTO BLUE JAYS ROSTER

--N-A-M-E-	B	-FLD	-AVG-	HR	RBI
GARCIA	R	2B	.333	0	3
UPSHAW	L	1B	.390	0	2
BELL	R	LF	.333	4	11
BARFIELD	R	RF	.292	2	5
WHITT	L	C	.146	1	4

--N-A-M-E--	B	-AB	-H-	-SO	-BB	-SB
GARCIA	R	48	16	2	0	1
UPSHAW	L	41	16	2	2	1
BELL	R	45	15	6	3	1
BARFIELD	R	48	14	5	0	2
WHITT	L	41	6	7	8	0

--N-A-M-E--	B	-AB	-H-	2B	3B	HR
GARCIA	R	48	16	1	0	0
UPSHAW	L	41	16	5	2	0
BELL	R	45	15	2	0	4
BARFIELD	R	48	14	5	0	2
WHITT	L	41	6	0	0	1

--N-A-M-E-	P	-W-L-	-ERA-	-IP	-H-
STIEB	R	3-0	1.69	26	25
KEY	L	2-1	2.25	24	26
LAVELLE	L	0-0	27.00	3	5
HENKE	R	0-1	1.17	11	4

--N-A-M-E-	P	-G	CG	SV	-BB	-SO	S
STIEB	R	3	1	0	12	1	S
KEY	L	3	1	0	8	9	S
LAVELLE	L	2	0	0	8	3	R
HENKE	R	5	0	2	1	6	R

(Figure 1)

While there is some trouble printing out accumulated statistics there are no minor quirks for printing out Box Scores. The Box Score feature is always displayed right after the game is over, and uses six displays, but when printed out all of the displays are printed at once and on one page. The Box Scores shows much of the same information as found in the sports page, and accumulated statistics. As well as some specific information about a game, error, sacrifice bunts, and so on.

However the information given by the Box Scores utility cannot be saved, only printed or displayed right after the game is over. If you should compile statistics before viewing a Box Score it will be lost. So for those who want to keep track of how their hitters did against a particular pitcher a printer comes in handy.

But what is the point of accumulating statistics and box scores? Well by saving a teams statistics to the Stats Compiler disk, besides these new statistics reflecting your managerial skills, you can use these saved teams just as you would teams found on the game or Player Stats/Team disk. To properly use a saved team each player has to have had one official At Bat with a hit, and all pitchers must have pitched one inning. Although the manual advises that since MLB II is a stats driven game it is best to wait until hitters have had forty ABs, and pitchers have pitched nine inning to reflect a players true abilities. This is where the Quik-Play feature comes in handy for those who want to use a team based on accumulated statistics, but do not want to have to manage a series of full length MLB II games to accumulate the required number of ABs and IPs.

It is this ability to use saved teams, whose statistics are a reflection of your managing abilities, just like those included with the game where the Stats Compiler really makes this game shine. With the other baseball simulations all that was determined was whether you won or lost, but by using this utility in conjunction with actual MLB II game you can see how your decisions, and their consequences affect a team over a long period of time. This utility will be even more useful when used with the General Manager/Owners Disk for those who want to run their own electronic baseball league.

Without the built in utilities MicroLeague Baseball II stands head and shoulders above the other baseball games. Even if you are not a fanatic of statistics this game is for you. From its many features that offer us the first taste of real baseball on the ST, to its ability to show how much of a manager you are in the long run this game is the best sports simulation for the ST. With the release of the General Manager/Owners disk, and Player Stats/Team disk MicroLeague Baseball II will just get better, and let ST owners dabble in the sport of baseball at a fraction of the cost! Do not walk, run and buy this game!

MICROLEAGUE II
from Micro League Sports Association
for the ST (color monitor or TV)
priced at \$74.95 Canadian

Keith Burnage

(c)AKA'87

Michtron's SUPERDIRECTORY

Reviewed by Ted McNicol

Can you find a file in your library of disks, in under 15 parsecs? You can!!!! I hate that in a person. Luckily, you were only joking, or you only have 8 disks.

I have tried a number of Public Domain programs to print out my disk directories, and found them to be extremely useful. However, since my disks keep changing, the printout was always out of date. In my case, this was compounded by not only keeping track of my private collection, but also of the public domain material for our disk of the month.

Superdirectory will solve that problem. You boot the program, select ADD, give the disk a number and voila. The disk is read and each file is added to a data base, with the following information: file name, disk number, path to file (folders), file date and time (note that this is of limited value unless you have a clock cartridge or use an autodate program when you boot disks), and file size. My first problem with this program occurred with folders. If the path to the file is over 24 characters

(i.e. /PROGRAMME.RS1/ETERNALRA.M/
ETERNAL.DOC),

a warning message is displayed and the files are not entered. This occurs fairly often if you have any nested folders. One possible solution would be to shorten the folder names.

The directory can contain up to 999 files, which should be more than enough. If not, there is the option of splitting up the data base into two or more smaller data bases, each with a common theme. It's fast, it's efficient, I'm in love with a utility.

The data captured includes not only the standard file information, but you can also add a single character for category and up to 25 characters as REMARKS, using the Editor. For the REMARKS, 12 pre-defined comments are provided, with only a mouse-click needed to enter any one of them. The Editor is very powerful, allowing changes to disk numbers and to previous entries.

You can also merge two or more Superdirectory files, saving the most recent, without losing any remarks or categories entered.

Once you have the data in there, there are a variety of ways of looking at it. There is the SORT command, with 9 options, such as sorting by file name, disk number (default), or category. The SORT can be on the whole file or within each disk.

There is also a FIND command, to seek out records quickly. Searches are from the present location to the bottom of the file, allowing for successive searches on the same "mask". The search "mask" can be used to find certain disks, categories, or files. In looking for files, dummies and wildcards can be used, if you are not sure or want to broaden the search.

For example, if you want all programs (.PRG extender), you can use the wildcard (*) as follows: "*.PRG". Any program, regardless of name, will be found, as the search will concentrate on the file extender. This searching can be used to identify and save records which you wish to move to another file, or to count occurrences which match.

My second problem with this program is on the output side. Five pre-set options exist, with no provision for user-defined printouts. The 80-column limitation they have chosen means that compromises must exist. If programs such as Haba-View could give compressed print (131 columns), why not Superdirectory? And while I'm griping, what's this with no page breaks. This is somewhat nitpicking, as most will find the 5 options sufficient, but there is room for improvement.

I don't want to close on a sour note, as this is one program I recommend highly to everyone who has more than 8 disks. You should also get the Autodate program (on NCAUG Disks 16 and 17), to get the most use out of it. For a utility, I rate this a solid 7 out of 10 on the McScale.

MIDISOFT STUDIO

Version 2.10

Midisoft Corporation
P.O. Box 1000 Bellevue, WA 98009
Price: \$99.00 US

Written by: Gordon Derry

The Atari ST is rapidly becoming the premiere computer for electronic musicians around the world. It already holds that position in Europe, and most German software companies are now developing their new software on the ST. For those who aren't familiar with this particular application, it all has to do with the MIDI IN and MIDI out ports on the back of your computer. MIDI stands for "Musical Instrument Digital Interface." Whether you are a musician just getting into the computer field, or an ST user looking to expand your creative horizons, music software can make your ST a powerful tool - and a lot of fun!

One of the first pieces of MIDI software you will want to get to unite your synthesizer(s) and the ST is a Sequencer. Most sequencers work something like a multi-track tape recorder, storing various "tracks" of music into memory, and saving these coordinated tracks to disk as a file. You can recall this file and edit it extensively, thus giving the sequencer great advantages over a tape recorder. The major difference is that while the tape only replays a series of past musical events, the sequencer produces first-generation music by actually playing all your MIDI instruments at once. You can edit and mix a composition extensively, without losing any of the sound quality, before producing a finished master tape.

Good MIDI software for the ST is finally appearing, after a long wait. There are great variances in features, user-friendliness and price, so it's important to shop carefully. One of the newest sequencers on the market is MIDISOFT STUDIO. It's price of \$99.00 sets it mid-way between simple beginner's programs and complex professional software. It will record up to 32 separate tracks. Although there are sequencers available that can record 48 and 60 tracks, 32 are more than enough for most applications. Approximately 30,000 notes can be stored with a 520 ST, and 70,000 with a 1040 ST. I have never recorded anywhere these amounts, so I imagine

there is plenty of room for the most lengthy, complex compositions.

The real beauty of MIDISOFT STUDIO is its ease of use and clarity. Graphically presented like an actual tape recorder, it has on-screen PLAY, RECORD, STOP, FF (fast forward), REWIND and PAUSE buttons. These functions, plus increasing and decreasing tempo, can also be accessed through the ST's special function keys. Slow Rewind, Instant Rewind, Auto Rewind, Step Play and Step Recording are also available. More on some of these later.

Pull-down menus, inset windows, mouse, and other familiar GEM features make it the friendliest music software I've seen. If you are comfortable with programs like 1st WORD, you can probably handle MIDISOFT STUDIO with little reference to the manual.

But the manual itself is a winner - it is clear, concise, and includes a glossary of computer/MIDI terms, very useful for a musician new to computers or a computer buff new to MIDI. As you've undoubtedly learned from hard experience, software manuals are often cryptic and more baffling than helpful to the new user. The only manuals I have come across that are better written and packaged than this one, are those of the TIMEWORKS series. MIDI software writers in general seem to be ignorant of the ST and MAC styles of user-friendliness. It is a great relief to find one who is committed to making entry into the digital music field simple and enjoyable.

With MIDISOFT STUDIO, you can see twelve tracks on the screen at one time. Each can be labelled with a 24-character name. With the click of a mouse button, you can scroll to any of the other tracks. The status (MODE) of each track is clearly shown as CLEAN, RECORD or PLAY, with the addition of being able to mute any tracks with OFF or playing just one choice with SOLO. These are valuable features for isolating a track and editing it.

The MIDI channel that each track is assigned to is shown clearly to the right. Beside this is the length of the track, in measures.

The main screen also displays several important features:

- FREE MEMORY - a graph which shows you how much available RAM is left.
- EDIT MARKS - for editing segments of a track, allowing you to set the beginning and end of a segment, and its destination.
- COUNT - telling you the position you are at on

whatever track or tracks are being played.

- TEMPO - which allows you to speed up or slow down the rate of recording and/or playback.

Aside from the standard DESK and FILE options - essentially the same functions you find in any GEM-based program - there are three other drop-down menus: SETUP, EDIT and MIDI. With SETUP, you can set:

- 1) the number of beats per measure;
- 2) the number of lead-in measures before actual recording is begun;
- 3) choice of an internal MIDI clock or external one, for timing and synchronization;
- 4) MIDI Song Pointers for start/stop and position synchronization with other devices;
- 5) Polyphonic or monophonic mode for each instrument;
- 6) OMNI On/Off, which tells the instrument whether to play information from all MIDI channels;
- 7) LOCAL On/off, allowing you to separate your keyboard from its own internal sound generators - important if you are using the keyboard to play a non-keyboard module, but also want a pre-recorded track played through that device;
- 8) MIDI THRU, the second part of the function allowing you to play a separate module from your keyboard. This directs the current signal to a specified MIDI channel;
- 9) Aftertouch Filter, allowing you to conserve memory by eliminating this space-consuming information if necessary.

There are several other features included here which help an experienced user to work more swiftly. FAST MOUSE decreases the distance you need to move the mouse on its pad to cover distance on the screen. EXPERT MODE removes all warnings and caution signals.

The most important aspect of a sequencer is its editing capabilities. These are what give the computer such a great advantage over the multi-track tape recorder.

In MIDISOFT STUDIO, the EDIT window offers features that affect an entire track and others that are for editing specific user-defined segments or "regions" of a track.

A full track can be ERASEd, MOVEd, COPYed (leaving the source track intact), or COMBINEd with another track. These functions are all very simple and straightforward.

TIME CORRECTION, also known as quantization, will correct the timing of a track. There is a choice of anywhere from a whole

note to a sixty-fourth note resolution. There are two modes for doing this: you can change the actual location of the note, or change its duration so that it is a multiple of the resolution note value. Or both.

Region editing functions are extensive but sometimes awkward. The biggest problem is with the way in which the region of a track is marked off. There is no graphic representation of the track, to let you point at a segment or individual note and mark it. Rather, you must figure out the boundaries by using "Edit Marks" in measures, beats, and ticks. This can be tricky at the very least. There is the possibility of Step Play, where you can play the notes or chords one at a time, and thereby find the points at which to begin and end your sequence. However, other sequences provide easier, more graphic methods of marking off segments and notes for editing.

Once you have located and marked off your region of a track, you can do a lot with it. You can INSERT it into another track, PASTE or overlay it, DELETE it, ERASE and leave the space blank, or TRANSPOSE it up to five octaves in either direction. You can, of course, transpose an entire track, which is useful for creating harmony.

There is no looping feature, which would allow you to repeat a musical phrase over and over, instead of having to play it repetitively. This can be accomplished through the INSERT and PASTE functions, but it is a time consuming and possibly complex operation.

Through the EDIT menu, you also access the STEP RECORD function, allowing you to enter music a single note or chord at a time. In this way compositions beyond your playing ability can be recorded step-by-step, then played back in real time. Information such as note size (duration), attack velocity

Continued page 38

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SarT:

NEBULA's new drawing program

Review by Hooman Simyar

Upon arriving home with the new program, I turned on my ST and loaded up SarT. A fullscreen window appeared with a menu at the top. Examining each menu, I found it easy to use, but in some cases I referred to the manual.

This program is a lot like Degas Elite but with some different features. Unlike Degas Elite, it has the vertical & horizontal sliders which allow you to make the window screen whatever size you desire.

There are four menus, desk, file, mode, and utilities. Under the mode menu you can select how you want to draw and what you want to draw with. You can draw lines with 3 different methods, 6 different line patterns, 3 different line end types (a feature not found on the Degas Elite), and 5 different line widths. The mode menu also includes box, circle, paint, spray can, fill, text, and eraser drawing modes. The spray can is like the airbrush on the Degas. For the box and circle there is a lot of adjustment that you can create to make drawing certain types of boxes and circles easier.

One feature I really like about this program is its fonts. On Degas Elite I had so much trouble with

adding new fonts that I gave up. In SarT you have six different fonts: The system large, medium, and small, English, Fat, and 1890's styles. A neat thing is that you can display the text at four different angles, 0, 90, 180, and 270 degrees. Then you can set the style of the text in 5 different styles. Rumor says it that soon you will be able to create your own fonts (Atari Standard Format) which will allow you to use an unlimited range of fonts for SarT. On the Utilities menu there are options like clear screen, move, set drives, view (to view the entire picture), select picture size, copy, mirror, zoom, and set parameters. Other options include printing the screen or a snapshot (snapshots are images of parts of pictures).

A great advantage is that you can load Degas pictures, so if you are a Degas user you can always transfer your Degas pictures onto SarT. I worked on SarT on medium resolution and found it quite useful and user-friendly. I came up with a picture entitled "Beauty of a Sunset."

This program costs \$39.95 or \$29.95 without the manual, but I suggest you get the manual since SarT is a more complicated program in certain areas.

SarT can be used as a low-cost minor desktop publishing program or just for having fun! I believe that it is your money's worth to buy SarT which can match the Degas Elite's advantages. In the future I hope Nebula Software will add more features to its program and create an even better SarT.

Beauty
of a
Sunset
by
Hooman
Simyar



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Publishing Partner Upgrades

By Bob Thompson

It's hard to keep up with the improvements, additions and upgrades available for Publishing Partner. However, I recently purchased 5 new disks for use with Publishing Partner. These disks are not available locally, and at this stage must be purchased directly from Softlogik.

The first disk is 'Publishing Partner Font Disk #1', featuring new screen fonts and non-Postscript printer fonts for Devoll, Spokane, and Thames.

The second and third disks are 'Font Factory Font Disks #1 and 2' (distributed by Softlogik), and feature three new fonts each: Avant Garde, Courier, Calligraphy; and Times, Helvetica Narrow, 16 Bit. These new fonts allow french characters.

The fourth and fifth disks are 'Font Factory Clip Art Disks #1 and 2'. These disks contain 5 Degas Elite Pictures on each disk (in both medium and high resolution), with each picture consisting of several clip art images. The computer system on page 17 is an example.

More details next issue.

MICRO C-Shell

Version 2.70

An Update To Avoid

I just received an update to one of my favorite software packages MICRO C-Shell and was so horrified at the end result that it has forced me to find the time to once again put my literary skills to the test.

I have had the pleasure to own Version 2.3 of MICRO C-Shell for quite a considerable amount of time. I have found that even though the documentation was skimpy it was flexible and friendly enough to allow me to become intimately acquainted with its powerful UNIX like command and file structure. I do not hesitate to recommend this program to anyone interested programming in a very powerful environment. The suggested retail price of \$49.95(US) is well worth it!

However, as with any good serious software package there comes a time when a newer more powerful version would be preferred. This was the case with MICRO C-Shell. I received a letter from Beckemeyer Development Tools informing me of the latest upgrade (Version 2.70), and of their offer to allow me to upgrade instead to MT C-Shell (Version 1.10) for a paltry \$75(US). Well, if you have been reading ANTIC, or following any of the advertisements/press releases on MT C-Shell you would have bit too.

It is everything that it is claimed to be. Alas, there is more to it than meets the eye. MT C-Shell is a true multiuser, multitasking UNIX like environment. It is a JUGGERNAUGHT of a program. And there is the problem.

I have a 520ST upgraded to 1MEG and have traded in my single sided drive for a double. So I have in effect a 1040ST. Well it isn't enough machine to even install MT C-Shell! Ross-Anthony at G-Plus in Gatineau was kind enough to allow me to use their equipment to install the program so that I could use it. You will need a minimum of 2 double sided disk drives with a 1040ST in order to just create a working copy of MT C-Shell for your own use!

After creating a working copy of the program you will need a 1040ST with its double sided drive in order to just run the program. Also, if you want to

run it in multitasking mode (dreams of background processing anyone?) you will need to leave the disk in the drive at all times! Note: there isn't much room left on the disk for anything else so you will need at the very least a second drive! My solution was the only one that I could afford. Thanks to the luck of the draw I won a FAST BASIC cartridge at the last ST meeting. I was able to use that along with a respectable dollar sum to purchase a single sided drive from a friend who had one to spare. So now I was ready for the real multitasking world.

I admit that I haven't given MT C-Shell a complete workout. But I have experienced it enough to know that you should not consider purchasing this package unless you are willing to put out the money to acquire a hard-disk drive. Anything else will leave you frustrated enough to swear off ever using this package. My upgrade now sits on the shelf waiting for the day when I can afford a \$1000 upgrade to my system (Its going to be a long day).

While multitasking MT C-Shell constantly accesses the disk drive for commands files scheduling and other activities. If you try this on a normal drive the in-out speed causes very visible jerkiness in the keyboard responses. I found it impossible to type and have chunks of data appear intermittently. With the data transfer speed of a hard-disk I am confident that this halting action would hardly seem noticeable.

My recommendations:

If you want power then by all means get MICRO C-Shell its worth every penny (\$49.95- US) and works wonderfully with a single sided drive and a 520ST.

If you want a multitasking full UNIX like environment and you have a 1040ST with both hard-disk and double sided drive then MT C-Shell is worth considering (\$129.95-US).

In either case unless you understand UNIX you should purchase a Primer of some nature. SAMS UNIX PRIMER PLUS would be a good choice and is recommended by BECKEMEYER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS.

Rick Beetham

HIGH ROLLER - by Mirrorsoft

Contrary to the name, this is not a gambling game but yet another air combat game. Well, the competition's stiff, it had best be good to convince us to part with our hard won dollars, right? The game comes on two single sided disks, and is copy-protected - strike one!

The scenario is implausible, something about you and your Harrier saving the poor helpless 6th Fleet from some nasty North African ... the less said the better. Your assets are, 1 Harrier, and 4 ground servicing outfits, all unfortunately at the bottom right corner of the map. Unfortunate because your prime objective, the enemy HQ, is at the top left corner about 500 miles away, and no Virginia, you don't have sufficient fuel for even a one way trip. The map consists of 512 sectors each 24 miles by 12 miles. Your task is to protect your ground units, attack enemy aircraft, tanks, ground missile sites, and stage across to destroy the HQ. Having set out, you can land, then call your ground units which, interestingly, seem to travel faster than your fighter, and if the square you land on is emptied of enemy units, they may condescend to refuel and rearm you.

The best aspect of this game, to my mind, is the graphics. The cockpit does look somewhat like a cockpit. You look out through the HUD (Heads up display unit). Remember F-15 by Microprose - this looks better. You flash past solid objects, mountains, bushes, SAM sites (that look a little like Rapier batteries), tanks, and, once over 10000 ft, enemy aircraft that look like aircraft, all in living colour. Your course, vertical speed, airspeed, roll indicator, altitude and pitch are displayed on the HUD. Once head down, there are three display units, an air attack/radar warning display, a instrument (power, fuel, armament) cluster, and a FOFTRAC (don't ask?). The in-flight motion as simulated by small bits of terrain or clouds flashing past depending on your speed, is pretty darn good - anyway, I liked it.

On start, you can choose from one of three levels of skill; practice, combat practice, or combat. You're then placed in the cockpit, in the bottom left square all set to go. Take off is fairly simple, particularly if you use vectored thrust for short take off before a transition into normal flight. By the way, landing using vertical thrust to hover, isn't too difficult either, but you will get to understand why the vertical speed indicator is so important. Once in the air go get 'em, you're carrying 3 1000 lb bombs, 2 IR missiles, and twin 30mm cannon. The bad guys do fight back, and while the flak puffs look pretty, when your missile

warning goes off, you'd best get real excited about it right now!

The simulation feels good, kinda neat to fly down valleys or soar over a mountain and down the other side. Thrust vectoring is vital, and effective in air to air combat. The FOFTRAC traces your track in white and that of enemy aircraft in red, very useful, in fact, one of the best features of the game. This display also shows terrain features and enemy ground forces if you fly over a the centre of the sector at 16000+ ft. Only one square at a time may be in the map, and it does not retain this information if you leave the area, a rather annoying feature. The sounds are very good, the turbine whine increasing with power, the explosions, the aggressive buzz indicating that your missiles are locked on a target. Again very impressive.

The instructions are kinda fun, all sorts of air to air diagrams, yet the functional descriptions are incomplete, not indexed, and weird (who would have thought that a red indicator for flaps would indicate retracted?). You must hit a target with a missile (for aircraft), a bomb, or for some reason three or more bursts of cannon fire, which seems a little much, however...

Mirrorsoft claims there are 3500 SAM sites, 3000 mountains, 1000+ tanks (which move around), and apparently innumerable aircraft, plus anti aircraft guns, and ground units. I've not seen every square, there are 512 remember, but each one I've seen had 7 SAM sites showing. You would need 31 of the typical missions as shown in the instructions to complete the game, realistically, probably 6 or 7. But, with no save feature, you'd best have a comfortable chair.

Well, what did I like? The graphics, the sound, the feel of flying and aircraft response, is super. You fly using the joystick for pitch, roll, heading, which I find much preferable to the mouse. Keyboard inputs effect functions such as chaff, flares, brakes, flaps, power, and weapons. The displays and instruments, particularly FOFTRAC are very well done. The warnings, such as "COLLISION PREDICTED" are very timely and useful. I particularly liked the blackout/redout when too much "G" is pulled or pushed. You are scored on each mission so you can track how your doing.

Unfortunately, there is some trouble in paradise. The game presents us with only one scenario which, from a time point of view takes a long, long, time. Once you fly out of a sector, even for a second, the FOFTRAC erases all the information in it. Not only do you loose the map information, but units that you

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By Alex Weatherston

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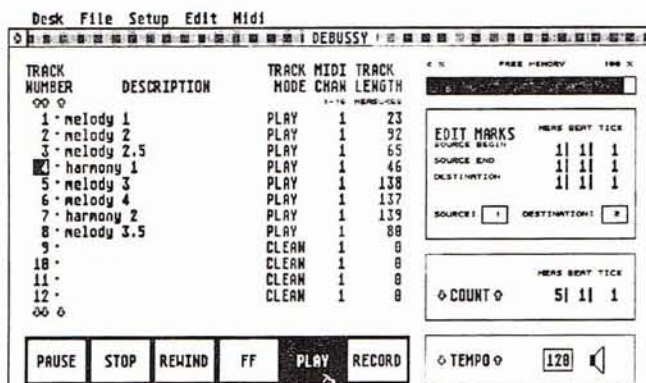
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(affecting loudness), release velocity (decay) and track number are selected by mouse on the screen. The actual notes are played on the MIDI keyboard. It is possible, while still in STEP RECORD mode, to go back and insert new notes anywhere, making this feature very versatile.

The MIDI menu offers special commands to be sent to MIDI instruments, such as System Reset, self-tuning requests, song selection for other sequencers or drum machines, and one called All Notes Off which kills any lingering, droning sounds.

As an added bonus, the program disk comes with a number of sequence files, allowing you to play music by the great composers with whatever instruments you choose. You can edit these compositions in whatever way you like, and listen to Mozart or Brahms the way you always thought they should be played. Apparently there are other disks of pre-recorded music - pop, classical and golden oldies - available. So even if you don't play keyboards very well, you can have a lot of fun juggling these files around.



Conclusion:

I found MIDISOFT STUDIO a pleasure to use. It is easy and quick to learn, with few commands to memorize. It seems to accomplish all it claims to, and swiftly. After the first few times, I didn't have to resort to the manual often at all. However, the lack of an index for the manual is a serious shortcoming that I hope MIDISOFT Corporation will correct in the near future.

The only real drawback of this program is its limited editing abilities. Its most glaring weakness, in my opinion, is its clumsy method of editing individual notes or MIDI events. It will accomplish all the basic functions most casual users would want, and may be suitable for many professionals, depending on their needs. But other sequencers offer a lot more: filtering of certain notes, separate volume control of

tracks and notes, editing of every single MIDI event, connecting several sequences - each with different timing - into one song, looping and repeat functions, and others.

These other, more complex sequencers, however, are much more expensive and far more difficult to understand and use.

All in all, MIDISOFT STUDIO gives a lot of value for its price, with greater ease of use, and therefore great time savings, than most other sequencers available.

Final Note:

If you are new to the MIDI/synthesizer field, there are several worthwhile magazines you may want to check out. I highly recommend you buy or borrow a copy of the MAY '87 issue of COMPUTE! It has a very useful, in-depth "Glossary of Electronic Music Terms," as well as a good introductory article on "The New Music." Ignore their incomplete, brief to the point of being useless, "Buyer's Guide to Music Software."

Two good electronic music magazines are available at most newsstands. ELECTRONIC MUSICIAN is a slick American publication, and MUSIC TECHNOLOGY hails from Britain. Comparing them is sort of like comparing START and ST USER - the subject matter is basically the same, but journalistic styles differ greatly. Both magazines regularly feature comprehensive software and hardware reviews, often ST-related. WARNING: the extensive jargon of this field can be very confusing at first.

Uploading Newsletter Files to ST BBS

There is a special section on the ST Base BBS operated by the NCAUG that can be used to drop off files for the newsletter.

This section (section 13) has been set aside for uploading files for the editor of Bytown Bytes. Access to reading or downloading of files from section 13 is limited to newsletter staff only. Any files to be uploaded must be in a FILE format. It can be a word processor file, an ASCII file, 8 bit or 16 bit.

The newsletter staff will check the section regularly to get any messages or articles. This may be the best way for many club members to get material to the newsletter staff. (Please forward a paper copy of any articles also, so that I can see paragraphing and alignment requirements.)

Bob Thompson, Editor
ST Base (613) 231-3411 (Section 13)

CLASSIFIED

Small items such as ads for articles wanted or for sale, questions, problems, tips, or other brief messages will be placed in this section free of charge to NCAUG members.

XE AND ST SOFTWARE FOR SALE!!

Championship Baseball (ST) \$30
One-on-one (XE) \$10
Wargame Construction Set (XE)... \$20

XE MAGAZINES AND ACCOMPANYING DISK

Why pay high prices for a single back issue when you can get a whole year of back issues at a fraction of the cost, and at the same time get the programs all on disk. Each package includes a holder, for the magazines, and a disk case as well. Please note that magazines will not be sold individually. A "D" denotes magazine and disk packages.

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9. Realm of Impossibility.....\$ 9.00
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1.Machine Language for Beginners.....\$ 9.00
2.Atari Graphics.....\$ 9.00
3.Inside Atari Basic.....\$ 7.50

4.Atari Games.....\$ 9.00
5.Compute's 1st Book of Atari....\$ 8.00
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8.The Atari Basic Source Book...\$ 9.50

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TOO MANY TO NAME! CALL!

CALL TOMMY ROBBS TO BUY OR FOR INFORMATION

PHONE: (613)256-3132

OR SEE ME AT THE MEETINGS

WANTED * WANTED

Does anyone want to sell a ST 300/1200 baud modem or 1200 baud modem for a cheap price? Also, can any on out there help me with the game "Phantsie II"? I need some hints. To help I have 4 amulets. Please help! Tommy Robbs Phone #256-3132

ST Software for sale

All original disks and packages complete documentation

Infocom Text Adventures\$20 each
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Witness, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
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MAGAZINES FOR SALE

Antic, Analog (back to first issues), Atari Connection, Hi Res, etc....
Great Prices! Bob Thompson
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High Roller - Continued from page 35

destroyed are miraculously resurrected. Why should the FOFTRAC be only capable of retaining one square at a time, rather than all that have been recce'd? As well, There are bugs in the operating part of the game, strange words have been known to appear on the display, and most annoying, your ground units may or may not refuel you. If they don't, there is no indication, just nothing happens, and it's game over. I've had targets disappear from the visual so I couldn't attack them - good move guys! This game is good enough that the weaknesses are frustrating. The bugs are annoying and inexcusable consi-

dering program cost. It is without doubt, alot of fun to fly and fight this simulation. I rate it considerably better than Harrier Strike Mission, but it could be so much more, particularly if shorter varied scenarios had been designed. If you're satisfied with a shoot'em up, you may well love this one. I continue to play and very much enjoy the game but can't recommend it without reservation considering the weaknesses I've found. The version I've used is that for the ST.

reviewed by Dave Dempster

Bytown Bytes SURVEY CARD #3 - July/August 1987

Please fill out the following sheet and return it to the editor, Bytown Bytes. You can return it at the next meeting, drop it off at G Plus, 130 Albert St., mail it to our mailing address, or give it to me in person.

If you don't want to destroy this page, please submit a photocopy.

Your comments will be most welcome.

Please rate each of the articles on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 is terrible, 5 is great). Please rate each article on level of interest (does the topic interest you), and on execution (how well was the article written or displayed).

ARTICLE	LEVEL OF INTEREST					EXECUTION					COMMENTS
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Window on Gaming	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Visiclues	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Tips & Bits	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
XE Library	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
News Station	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Mercenary Review	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
ST Presidential Bytes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Cheap Upgrade	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
ST Tips	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
ST Base BBS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Hardball Review	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Championship B.B.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
MicroLeague B.B.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Super Directory	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
MidiSoft Studio	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Sart Review	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Publishing Partner	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Micro C-Shell Review	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
High Roller Review	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Bytown Bytes Index	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Classified	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Survey Card	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

Weather : Hot, Dry, Cold, Humid,
Hell, we don't know.

July 25, 1887

CHIANG TIMES

GARY DUNLEAVY ACCOSTED FOR PROVIDING GREAT SERVICE

In a surprise move earlier today, members of the local Atari community, normally a very calm and pacifist group of citizens, stormed the premises of Chiang Video at 1054 Bank Street, seized the owner, and proceeded to point out to him that his prices were unfair, forcing them to ignore other stores and drive great distances, using their precious gas money, to get his deals. Crowds on the street jockeyed for better position as the salemen of the store rushed to his defence. George Greely was there.

"It was, like, a nightmare. These guys...at least ten...maybe twenty...I don't know..Okay, maybe four or five, came in, and asked for the owner. And they didn't do it very politely, either. I mean, like, they said 'Hey, where is this guy?' or something like that. Really. But this guy in a grey sweater came out from the back and said, 'Yes, can I help you?', and they like grab his shirt and voice their concerns. Really."

The salesmen waded into the fray and assumed a diamond formation around their leader.

"How come your prices are so low?", inquired one of the Atarians.

"Because." replied Ken Farquhar, ace salesman number one.

"Why is the service so prompt and reasonable?", asked another.

"Because." answered repair guy Jim Dooley.

"And why are the staff such amazingly knowledgeable and fun guys?", asked Atari person number three.

"That's the way it is." responded Ross Judson, ace salesman number two.

"And that's the way it's gonna stay", added Gary Dunleavy, "for as long as I'm in this town."

Satisfied that their questions had been answered, the four or five Atari people released the shirt and stepped back.

"You boys are all right by us." they said. "We'll support you as long as you keep it up. And don't let it slip. We'll be counting on you in the future."

There was a collective gasp from the staff of the store as the sacred trust was passed into their hands.

"We will. You guys know it, you'll get the products you need and the support you deserve. We can handle it."

"We'll be back" were their parting words.

And then, according to George, the four or five masked Atari people faded away into the sunset. This reporter feels that while our good friend George Greely may not be the most reliable source around, this is probably a pretty accurate depiction of the events that occurred. Maybe even the fading away into the sunset part.

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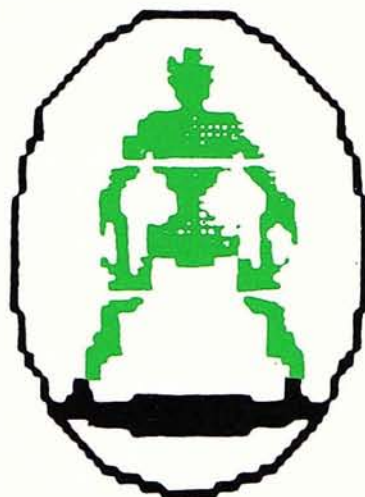
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LANGUAGE	MACHINE
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AGE GROUP	10 TO ADULT
CLASS	STRATEGY ACTION
SOUND	YES
ANIMATED GRAPHICS	YES
EQUIPMENT	JOYSTICK

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